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Intercultural Discourse Among White and Non-White Youth in Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Canada

by

©

Tejwant K. Chana

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Intercultural Discourse Among White and Non-White Youth in Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Canada** submitted by Tejwant K. Chana in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in International/Intercultural Education.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigated the contemporary perceptions, knowledge, and experiences of white and non-white grade 12 students regarding "racial" and cultural diversity within Canadian society upon the immediate completion of public high school. Because it is assumed that the educational system is dynamic and reflective of the times, the underlying purpose of this was to examine whether schools were adequately preparing students for participation in a multi-"racial" and multi-cultural society.

The collection of data consisted of a total of three phases. In the first phase a survey questionnaire was administered to a total of 41 grade 12 students. The second phase entailed school and classroom observations, and in the last phase, a total of 10 students (5 white, 5 non-white) were interviewed in-depth.

The findings reveal that despite Canada's history of diversity and official declaration as a multicultural country, students are not adequately being prepared for participation in a multi-"racial" and multi-cultural society as Canadian schools continue to employ traces of the colonizer's model of education found in previous centuries.

It is hoped that the findings within the context of this research study will be a resourceful contribution in both theory and practice in the discourse on "race" and ethnic relations in post-colonial Canada.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my Father and my Mother, Narmail and Inderjit Chana............*"My Greatest Teachers."* The existence of this thesis is entirely for you. I Thank You both with all that I have in me for the lifelong sacrifices you have made in ensuring that I receive an education and more. I appreciate everything that you have done and treasure the true humanitarians that you are.

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CHAPTER I

SITUATING THE RESEARCH STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Everyday people in Canada, all of whom possess different social locations based on the intersections of their "race," culture, class, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and/or experiences, continuously interact with one another in both direct and indirect social, professional, personal, business, political, systemic, institutional, and/or educational contexts. As Canada's population continues to diversify in composition, these interactions will be existentially abundant. But how much do we as citizens who occupy the same geographical soil know about, understand, and accept each Others' social locations? Or should I be asking, do we need to?

The concepts of multiculturalism, pluralism, diversity, poly-ethnic societies, and related labels, are not a newly materialized modern social reality. Countries around the world historically have been, and continue to be comprised of culturally and/or "racially" diverse people. Although Canada is no exception to this global demographical reality, it is distinctively the first nation in the world to officially proclaim multiculturalism as a defining characteristic of its society as evidenced by the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy and then the legislative passing of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988. The establishment of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation in 1996, and the March 21 anti-racism campaign thereafter have further contributed to sustain Canada's global reputation as a tolerant and fair society committed to the praxis of multiculturalism. The management of Canada's aboriginal, “racial,” and ethnic relations is not only widely admired, but has become an exemplary model for the rest of the world today.

Yet a closer examination into Canada's historical and present context reveals a not so idyllic picture. Earlier this century, xenophobic attitudes, particularly at the political level, governed the life course of non-white individuals already in Canada and those wanting entry. For example, immigration laws were explicitly racist in wording and intent openly discouraging and prohibiting non-white, non-European settlement; Acts were devised as situations emerged to prevent the entry of non-white individuals; Japanese-Canadians were interned during the Second World War; and Jewish refugees were denied entry during the Holocaust. However, no one has been more overtly discriminated upon than Canada's First Nations Peoples. Just as Canada's Native People were neglected and subjugated to colonial rule throughout Canada's history since the arrival of the Europeans, they continue to remain marginalized in a system that continues to violate all aspects of their human rights and entitlement to Canada.

Today, the reality remains that post-modern Canada is a settler colony. Everyone in Canada, with the exception of the First Nations People, is an immigrant, or a descendant of immigrants who came from a wide range of countries around the globe. The growth and development of Canada by immigrants from all over the world remains a significant part of Canada's history and continuing evolution. Although the twentieth century has been characterized by immigration which has notably contributed to the building, shaping and reshaping (Abu-Laban, and Li, 1998) of Canada, the issues surrounding multiculturalism, immigration, "race", Aboriginal issues, and national identity remain explosive points of contestation today at the social, political, economic, and institutional levels between the dominant group and the subordinate groups. As we enter the new millennium, these issues and realities will not simply vanish or perish voluntarily with time but rather, will remain, and continue to remain an integral part of Canadian society from one generation to the next given Canada's permanent "multi-racial" and "multi-cultural" characteristic.

Given that the educational system is a major socializing agent that transmits social norms and knowledge, and prepares individual students for adult citizenship (in a multicultural society), this study centres specifically around grade 12 students and their views, opinions, and experiences regarding "racial" and cultural diversity within Canadian society today upon the immediate completion of high school. Because it is assumed that the educational system is dynamic and reflective of the times, the underlying purpose of this thesis then is to examine the views and opinions of students, who are the educated products of an institution, regarding "racial" and cultural diversity.

ENGAGING THE QUESTION OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITHIN A DIVERSIFIED SOCIETAL CONTEXT

The emergence of this thesis is very much a result of my own personal experiences of growing up as a non-white person in Canada. Although many people would "classify" me as an East Indian on the basis of my physical appearance, I have not yet stepped foot on India's soil. I would define myself as a Canadian-Sikh born in London, England, with all of my relatives residing there, having historically deep prominent family roots in Nairobi, Kenya and surrounding areas since the late 1800s, and being of Northern Indian, Punjabi origin; an identity well representative of the present post/neo-colonial era.

The establishment and comfort with this identity was a personal struggle for me given that in Alberta, according to my experiences, ones skin colour alone determined ones' origin hence identity. This "boxed" perspective clearly did not take into account the complex identities individuals possessed as a result of the colonial encounter. Because I was always regarded and reminded from the "Canadians" that I was Indian to them, I learned and digested the fact that I was not "Canadian." This is still very much my reality today despite growing up in Canada, being educated here from K-12 along with my undergraduate degrees and currently my graduate degree, I have done/do "Canadian things," and am a contributing member of society; in other words I have been and am still a part of everyday Canadian culture. Today I am still constantly asked, whether it be initiated on the basis of my skin colour, or name, "where are you (originally) from?," and/or "when did you come to Canada (from India)?"

In addition to having my identity interrogated, I (have) also experience(d) racism. In Canada, it began at the age of two for my family and I when we had moved to Montreal from London, England. Although the political arena had begun to admit non-white, non-Europeans to Canada in the early 1970s, the social climate was not welcoming to "Pakis" (Bowerman, 1980; Kallen, 1995; Singh, 1994). We, my family and I, experienced and witnessed a great deal of verbal racism as well as a lot of physical violence from white Canadians. My experiences, past and present, are too hurtful, degrading, and infuriating to freely share with readers. I will justly share one experience in particular, to give you the reader, a dose and glimpse into one of my early experiences which was followed by a chain of other experiences.

> I recall one Sunday afternoon in particular, when I was six years old. My family and I were stuck in a traffic jam on Glenmore Trail near the reservoir on 14St as we were heading home from the Temple. There were five white people in a car and they kept calling us "Pakis" along with other hurtful comments while simultaneously making rude/mocking gestures. Naturally, we were terrified given our previous experiences with racism. My parents made a conscious effort to ignore them hoping they would leave us alone. My parents comforted us (my sister, brother, and I) by letting us know that we will be home soon, and by discussing the afternoon activities they had planned for us. The next thing we knew, two of the men approached our vehicle with baseball bats and began smashing the body of our car. They smashed the back left window. It was at that point my father stepped out of the car to protect us from getting physically hurt from the hits. He was physically struck a number of times by the two men. No one in the traffic jam witnessing all came to help us. This malicious case went unreported.

Individually, the majority of racism I experienced was at school. During my years of public schooling from K-12 in the 1970s and 1980s in Calgary, the percentage of non-white students was significantly low given Calgary's predominant white population. In elementary school, the racism I experienced was overt in both verbal and physical forms. In junior high, the frequency of physical attacks declined slightly. It was at that particular period in my life that I became cognitively aware of my "bicultural" identity. For example, in addition to being on the volleyball team and a member of the student's council, I also went to the Temple after school to take harmonium[1] lessons and learned to read and write Punjabi, whereas many of my peers would learn to play the piano after school. No one at school was aware of my enrolment in these classes after school for fear of being ridiculed further. High school proved to be more of a challenge for me, as I was no longer comfortable denying/hiding the Indo-Sikh part of my identity at school as was expected of me by my white peers; white was right.

---

[1] The harmonium is a classical Indian musical instrument.

I attended high school in the late 1980s in Calgary. There were approximately 2500 students at my school of which approximately 95% were of European descent, and the remaining 5% were of various non-European backgrounds. We non-white students consciously worked at "fitting in" with the white majority and avoided associating with one another. Though it was not overtly stated, the denial of our cultural roots and lack of pride in our cultural identities was implicitly recognized. In my recent conversations with non-whites who went to high school during the same time period, I have come to learn that this phenomenon was not unique to me nor my school. Seeing the value in our cultures and affirming our identities was difficult as we faced ongoing incidences of racism, ridicule, and marginalization. As a result, we ended up not believing and welcoming the value and strength in our respective cultures and identities. During that period of time, schools did not validate, embrace, or acknowledge what (minimal) diversity was present but rather ignored the existence of "racial" and cultural heterogeneity within their system.

My experiences with daily racism and their psychological, emotional, and social impact on me raised many questions within me from an early age and remained as I continue(d) to encounter racism (overt and covert) at the personal and systemic levels. I began to question how the different "races" and cultures evolved? Why people are degraded on the basis of their skin colour? Why "race" is so important to some people? How white has become the right skin colour to be? How people perceive "races" other than their own? Are there commonalities among different cultures? If so, what are they? In my first year, as I was completing the electives for my Bachelor of Science degree program (health and healing was/is one of my passions), I serendipitously came across the fields of Anthropology and Sociology. Rather than remaining oblivious and untrue to my inquiries, I chose to formally begin to search for the answers to my questions surrounding "race," ethnicity, cultures, differences, identity, and so forth. Not only was each school of thought (Anthropology and Sociology) equally influential in providing me with a theoretical foundation but each was also instrumental in providing me with the opportunity to academically explore and understand the cultural and historical roots of my Punjabi-Sikh background which I was not previously exposed to in all of my years of formal schooling. Learning about the rich history of my origins was an empowering experience that went far beyond learning about key ideologies, values, beliefs, dates, people, events, contributions, and so forth. It provided me with a sense of footing as it validated the rightful existence of my Punjabi-Sikh identity which was not ever previously done.

However, nothing quite prepared me, nor equipped me to gain such a concrete understanding of the present reality of "race" and ethnic relations as did Educational Foundations 522 - Education and Development, and Educational Foundations 525 - Global Education. These two graduate level courses introduced to me (for the first time in all my years of formal education) the historical reality of colonialism; an era that was never mentioned to me before. Comprehensive knowledge about the rooted history of colonization and the disaster it ignited provided me with a foundation in understanding the present "post-colonial" era we find ourselves in in the world. On a personal level, it ameliorated the persistent struggle I faced with "titling" my identity and finding my sense of belonging on the "global map." Educational Foundations 525 in particular, provided me with an understanding as to why I was never taught anything about my culture, or the historical roots of Sikhs and other Non-Europeans in Canada.

In addition to the emergence of this thesis being attributed to my personal experiences, my professional experiences were also contributory. During the last year of my undergraduate program, I began teaching an evening English course to 40 international students on behalf of HUB International at the University of Alberta. My students ranged in age from 24-48, and were all non-white graduate students here for study purposes. I had designed the course based on the students' responses to a three page survey questionnaire I had constructed and distributed which essentially asked each student to explicitly state what they precisely expected to gain out of this course. Although I had prepared the curriculum based on their responses, I found that my students would always end up discussing the "Canadian" culture and their experiences within it. They especially shared the instances of racism and discrimination that they had/were experiencing not only within the University environment with classmates and professors but the larger society as well (see Toh and Cawagas, 1995 Report). I was aware of how important it was for them to share their experiences and have someone help them make sense of what was happening to them. I would spend approximately an hour with my students after class listening, conversing, and providing insights where accurately possible with the clear intent of empowering them. We were a tightly connected group of people each possessing different social locations yet a profoundly poignant common experience. My students were an invaluable resource to me as I not only gained insights into "Other" non-whites' realities within Canada, but I came to realize that I was not alone in my experiences or their direct psychological, emotional, and mental impact.

Another group of students that also provided me with invaluable insights into the experiences of non-whites within Canada were my students at The Calgary Bridge Foundation For Youth. This agency is a non-profit organization that assists immigrant and refugee youth to overcome language, cultural, and social barriers to succeed in school and society. Through the development of a successful rapport with my non-white students, they had voluntarily confirmed verbally what I had already speculated via my first hand interactions and observations of them. They informed me of their desire to be as physically and culturally "white" as possible. When I asked why, I found that it stemmed from the racism they were experiencing at school from their peers, as well as from the larger "Canadian" society. They were degraded on a daily basis and according to them, the only way to put an end to the degradation was to dismiss their identities entirely and become more "Canadian." The biggest challenge these students faced was trying to maintain a positive sense of "racial" and cultural identity within a society that was constantly telling them via various methods to change.

The emergence of this study has therefore evolved out of an equal combination of my personal and professional experiences, and a genuine concern for peaceful and just human relations. Canada, as it is today termed and referred to, is a relatively young nation that is still developing socially, politically, economically, and socially. It has transgressed from an overtly xenophobic colonial foundation to that of a just and fair multicultural society all within a mere century. Although the Canadian government has officially declared Canada a multicultural country as exemplified by its Multiculturalism Policy, and *Multiculturalism Act*, I question society's orientation given my knowledge, experiences, and insights. The intent of this thesis is to investigate the knowledge, thoughts, and perceptions of diverse youth, all of whom possess different locations, to measure whether attitudes and behaviours regarding "race" and ethnic relations have changed during the course of this century given that Canada is an officially multicultural nation.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research study investigates the contemporary perceptions, knowledge, and experiences of white and non-white grade 12 students regarding "racial" and cultural diversity within Canadian society upon the immediate completion of public high school. The purpose of conducting this research is to gain a grounded understanding, through the youths' voices, their views of Canadian society, the realities surrounding "racial" and cultural identities as experienced by young people in a pluralistic school environment, and lastly to understand the role of education in preparing multicultural citizens. It is hoped that these findings will be a resourceful contribution in both theory and practice to the goals and aims of individuals operating at the systemic, grassroots, classroom, and community levels with the various Canadian educational systems, and as well to the discourse on Canadian "race" and ethnic relations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The study essentially offers an opportunity to gain insights into the experiences of students who possess a variety of social locations based on the intersection of social factors such as "race," culture, class, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, and/or experiences. Scholars of multiculturalism and related discourses have provided constructive insights in the areas of "race", culture, ethnicity, identity formation, and power particularly in the last two decades. All disciplines are now hearing the "[v]oices of those positioned at the 'margins'...[and]...are contributing to a reformation of what constitutes 'knowledge'" (Fine, Powell, Weis, and Wong, 1997, p. vii). Yet across various texts "there rings out a consistent silence, a silence on questions of whiteness" (ibid, p. vii). A number of scholars have argued that within the discourse of contemporary race relations, it is the "people of colour" who are the central focus as the problem or phenomenon to be studied and understood, thereby allowing whiteness to "escape social and intellectual surveillance" (ibid, p. ix). It is hoped that this study which gives voice to diverse students' experiences within a multicultural environment will add to the surge of cultivating literature surrounding the contemporary experiences of non-whites as well as to the nascent literature on "whiteness" so that the relationship between these two binary locations is further understood.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

One of the challenges that particularly surface for non-white people addressing the discourse on "race," is identifying the appropriate terminology to employ so that they themselves are not viewed or labelled as racists as they use terms that clearly and accurately communicate what they mean. Throughout this study, the two terms steadily employed are white and non-white. The basis for using these two terms only is embedded in the premise that the legacy of the colonial encounter continues to shape contemporary Canadian social relations.

The label white is not based on biology but is rather "the colour of domination" (Razak, 1998, p.11) and privilege (Lynn, 1994; McIntosh, 1992). White people share in common a "political arrangement" that allots them power and certain social, political, and economical advantages on the basis of skin colour (Henry et al, 1995; Jay, 1995). To avoid the formulation of other interpretations and meanings of the construct of white within the context of this study, I have used Frankenberg's definition which captures the essence of whiteness (1993).

> First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint," a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, "whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed." (p. 1).

The term non-white is used throughout this study "to talk about the binary relationship of power where 'white' is the dominant term..." (Mukherjee, 1994, p. 203). Non-white individuals share in common a location of subordinance rather than domination, marginality rather than normativity, and disadvantage rather than privilege which is rooted in the colonial experience (Frankenberg, 1993). I have consciously dismissed employing modern society's use of the terms "minority," "racial minority," and "ethnic minority," as those unfamiliar with the academic discourse related to "race" misinterpret the term minority and assume it to be numerical in context. The term "visible minority" itself is a political construct "first used in the early 1980s to denote groups that are distinctive by virtue of their race, colour, or 'visibility'" (Boyd, 1992. p. 285). It was created by Statistics Canada in response "to the 1986 census questions on ethnic origins, birthplace, and mother tongue..." (ibid, p. 285). Socially, the term visible minority is used to designate "non-white, non-Caucasian racial minorities in Canada who have distinctive physical characteristics, especially pertaining to skin colour" (Fleras & Elliot, p. 440, 1996). I have rejected the use of this label particularly as it speaks from the location of a central white voice. In contrast, from the standpoint of a non-white individual I ask "are we not all visible to the eye?" I have also abstained from using the term "people of colour" despite its recently gained credence and wide usage. Accepting this espoused term is problematic as again, the dominant white group is considered to constitute the universal norm as it excludes white people from the colour spectrum and characterizes all non-white people as possessing a colour. Is white not a colour?

I am well aware that “race” discourse does not solely centre around white versus non-white. However, within the framework of this study, the use of the terms white and non-white are employed based on the colonial legacy which positions groups in hegemonic hierarchical structures.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The reporting of this study consists of six chapters. This chapter introduced the research study and the areas I will attempt to address. Chapter II outlines the conceptual framework employed as well as the related literature. Chapter III explains the methodology and methods used in this study. Chapters IV and V contain the research findings. Chapter IV presents the students' views and experiences regarding "race" and culture within Canada and Chapter V relays students' experiences within a "racially" and culturally heterogeneous school environment. The final chapter, Chapter VI concludes the study by summarizing the key research findings, suggestions for further research, and some personal reflections.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present an introductory overview of the literature to provide a theoretical framework for the present study. This chapter first begins by closely examining the theoretical origins of racism followed by the historical roots of international colonialism, specifically within the historical and contemporary Canadian context. Lastly, a brief examination of Canada's educational systems' current responses in "managing" the increased "racial" and cultural diversity within Canada is highlighted.

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF "RACISM"

To gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary social relations between various "racial," ethnic, and cultural groups, the principle of *historical specificity* can not be overlooked. "This principle forces us to understand the conditions under which non-British (and non-French) groups have been treated over time, and the structural constraints under which these people have to live. Put another way, one cannot adopt an ahistorical approach to studying ethnic relations" (Anderson and Frideres, 2000, p. 11). This principle is the foundation of a number of social scientists' premised argument that current relations and interactions within society between dominant and subordinate groups can not be explained as static random moments in time, but rather stem from complex rooted histories of hegemonic oppression by the dominant group which continue to exist in restructured fashionable forms (Apple, 1979; Blaut, 1993; Bolaria and Li, 1988; Fleras and Elliot, 1996; Henry et al, 1995; Pomfret, 1981; Razack, 1998). Therefore, "[a]t no time, of course, can people escape the relationships of past and present and simply transcend history" (Robertson, 1986, p. 7). To accurately understand modern Canada's evolution and present social context, that is, to understand "why" and "how" it is what it is, "...historical connections between international colonialism, treatment of non-white immigrants as colonial subjects, and the pattern of racial domination and exploitation" must be drawn and remain a theme of overriding importance (Bolaria, 1979; cited in Ujimoto, 1988, p.127).

Prior to the arrival of the European colonizers to Canada, and other parts of the world, individual societies lived their lives within the context of their own cultural paradigms (Bernstein et al, 1992; Bodley, 1988; Frideres, 1988 & 1998; Furley and Watson, 1978; Gibbins, 1997; Nyerere, 1968; Trigger, 1985). They were "politically autonomous, decentralized, and economically self-sufficient" (Bodley, 1988, p. 1) and depended on local economies as a means for survival (ibid, et al). The growth and development of industrial capitalism in Europe during the sixteenth century eventually resulted in various European nations' desire to control and seize access of foreign raw materials and resources around the globe (Berstein, et, al, 1992; Blaut, 1993; Bodley, 1988; Magdoff, 1978; Mazrui, 1975; Potter, 1992; Robertson, 1986). Through political coercion and repeated violent military invasions by the Europeans, colonial settlements were ultimately established, and the imperial powers had annexed global control of foreign nations and of the peoples inhabiting the land (ibid; Ray 1996). In the words of Blaut (1970), it was in essence the "white exploitation of the non-white world..." (p. 118). Non-Europeans' contact with European imperialists who were driven by the "'inner logic' of capitalism itself" (O'Connor, 1970, p. 101) not only marked the changes in the political economy of "races," but equally marked the birth of unequal white, non-white human relations.

During the process of economic expansion and capitalist development, the discourse of "race" and human evolution simultaneously emerged within all scientific disciplines "in the late eighteenth century, and [eventually] reached its high point during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Solomos and Back, 1996, p. 34) as a direct result of the colonizers' contact with physically and culturally diverse peoples of the world. "[The] Europeans imaginations were intrigued by sustained contact with highly diverse populations whose appearance and culture stimulated an outpouring of amusement, fascination, and repulsion" (Fleras and Elliot, 1996, p. 50). The concept of *"racial" types* was considered to be a "common sense" approach in the eyes of the

Europeans as they attempted to explain and sort out the diverse array of human physical characteristics. "Racial groups were [hierarchically] ranked according to their resemblance to white Europeans..." (Bock, 1988, p. 7) thereby marking white as the reference point for all human comparison. The comparative "scientific" classification and ranking of human beings around the world gained rapid acceptance in Europe as "thinkers realized that moral philosophy was no longer an adequate tool for examining the social complexities of the new situation" (Bohannan and Glazer, 1988, p. xii). In 1745, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, proposed an orderly nomenclature to classify mankind into four main is: European, Asiatic, African, and American Indian, on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin colour, hair type, lip shape, and other features (Hughes and Kallen, 1974); an approach he renownedly used in classifying plants. Then in 1781, German physiologist Johann Blumenbach, proposed a classification system based solely on the shapes of heads and skulls in which he proposed a direct correlation between the cranial capacity of "races" and their mental capabilities. Consequently, he classified mankind into five main "races": Caucasian (European), Negro, Mongol, Malayan, and American Indian (Fleras and Elliot, 1996; Hughes and Kallen, 1974). Such physical typologies led many theologians like Johann Kaspar Lavater, to randomly formulate their own theories and declare that "physical appearance was a reflection, even a determinant, of moral and intellectual character" (Solomos and Back, 1996, p. 34).

The classification of peoples into different biological categories with hierarchical rankings of superiority and inferiority among social scientists and scientists proved to have no empirical validity and earned a reputation as a pseudo science (Boas, 1962; 1965; see also Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead). In the second half of the nineteenth century, European Anthropologists[2] introduced a second school of thought, *cultural evolution,* as their guiding paradigm to understanding human diversity. Cultural evolutionists were unilineal evolutionists who argued that cultures progressed from the simple to complex; complex cultures were "civilized," and "primitive" cultures were simple, and like "living fossils" of obsolete Europeans (Barrett, 1984; Bohannan and

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[2] Although the historical discipline of anthropology has no marked beginning per se, its emergence was a critical response to the interdisciplinary approach employed in tracking human evolution

Glazer, 1988). They argued that by understanding these "living fossils," the cultural evolution of mankind could be reconstructed and charted.

The fathers of cultural anthropology, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), and Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), were all "armchair" cultural evolutionists who were far removed from their biologically diverse subjects but nevertheless managed to postulate a universal unilineal history of mankind based exclusively on the works they had read of missionaries and travellers. Herbert Spencer developed an evolutionary cultural paradigm in the form of a ladder in which man ascended to. His paradigm was based on a comparative model, whereby, savages were at the very bottom, followed by barbarians, then feudal societies, and lastly modern civilization at the very top (Barrett, 1984; Bohannan and Glazer, 1988; Vago, 1989). Cultures "progressed" as a direct result of the strong dominating the weak, and only the strong progressed. For Lewis Henry Morgan, technology was the key determinant of evolutionary success. The technologically advanced society was deemed to be the most civilized and therefore possessed the largest brains which was indicative of mental superiority (ibid). Lastly, for Edward Burnett Tylor, morality was the measurement that indicated a society's level of civilization. He maintained that the educated worlds of Europe and America, were the standards for progressive societies, while "savage" tribes were the least civilized and progressive groups as exemplified by their lack of goodness (ibid).

Both the biological and cultural models of evolution failed to produce any valid explanations of human diversity and evolution but instead were highly racist models with an underlying assumption that "race" and culture were intimately connected (Boas, 1965; Miles, 1989). Today, this theoretical ideology which characterizes individual "racial" groups (as identified by their skin colour) as possessing natural innate cultural traits and behaviours specific to that "race" is termed *racialization*, and is used primarily in the United Kingdom literature by those scholars who employ a political economy framework (Miles, 1989). However, within the context of his book The Mind of Primitive Man, Boas (1911) repeatedly points out the marked cultural achievements and superiority of past Non-European civilizations in mankind's history. He consistently demonstrated via scientific examples, that there is no difference between the mind of the "primitive" man, or the "civilized" man. He argued that each culture exists within the context of its own environment and needs, and should be viewed in reference to that relationship rather than by externally selected extraneous criteria. This is what the new and contemporary breed of anthropologists refer to as, *cultural relativism*. Nevertheless, Europeans developed and used the biological and cultural models of evolution to explain and champion their own perceived evolutionary success (Blaut, 1993) and used this "Godgiven supremacy" (Robertson, 1986, p. 28) as a justification for the exploitation of the colonized (Bolaria and Li, 1988; Fleras and Elliot, 1996; Frideres, 1998; Mazrui, 1978; Sifuna, 1990). Blaut (1970; see also 1993) articulates that the rise of imperialism did not stem from any level of biological or cultural "superiority" among Europeans but rather "genocide."

> The acquisition of disease-emptied land in limitless quantities was the *one* major advantage which Europeans managed to wrest over the civilizations of Africa and Asia. In this model Europe had no "urge to expand" not shared by these other civilizations; nor did Europe have any technological advantage, save ships that were slightly more sophisticated as a result of the prior epoch of African piracy; nor did Europe display any other distinguishing sign of cultural advancement or achievement-motivation in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. She merely got to the New World first, and obtained its lands in exchange for genocide (p. 123).

Yet these ethnocentric "Eurocentric[3]" constructed ideologies justifiably (according to the Europeans) fuelled the rise and expansionism of global imperialism (ibid).

Although colonial rule varied situationally from country to country, there were universal patterns between the relationship of the white colonizer and the non-white colonized. Despite the agreeance among academics in general as well as the wealth of earlier documented literature confirming the use of physical and/or cultural genocide as the governing practices employed by the colonizers in the name of "progress," Davis and Zannis (1973) point out that many "colonial appologists" (p. 54) seldom admit to the use of brutal force by colonialists to secure dependency from the colonized peoples. In referring specifically to the Canadian context, "Native people in Canada have been subjected to annihilation since the arrival of the French" (Anderson and Frideres, 1981, p. 266). Frideres (1988) points out that

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[3] Blaut (1993) defines Eurocentrism as "a label for all the beliefs that postulate past or present superiority of Europeans over non-European..." (p. 8).

> [a] review of the documents relevant to the initial contact period between the English and the Indians in Canada reveals that Native concerns were completely overlooked and ignored....When [ignoring Natives] was no longer feasible due to the need for westward expansion, the English chose to isolate Indians through the reserve system or to annihilate them, as they did the Beothuk Indians of Newfoundland (p. 21).

"Although later charters recognized the existence of Natives, they did so in extremely racist fashion" (ibid, p. 21) as exemplified by the statement from the charters of Charles I, in which he authorized the state to

> ...collect troops and wage wars on the barbarians, and to pursue them even beyond the limits of their province and if God shall grant it, to vanquish and captivate them; and the captive put to death....(p. 21)

Owen, et al. (1967) explained how

> [t]he European fisherman who settled around the shores of the island in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries resented their [Indians] petty pelfering, and shot them down at every opportunity, the French even placing a bounty on their heads (pp. 188-189; cited in Anderson and Frideres, 1981, p. 266).

Another typical example of "intended" physical genocide highlighted by Anderson and Frideres (1981) was

> the attempt to do away with Indian people on the Prairies. One strategy used (and still used in South America) was to infect blankets with various diseases that Whites were immune to or had procedures to control, i.e., inoculation. Patterson (1972) points out that this strategy was used on the Prairies with the result that thousands of Indians died (p. 266).

Although mass physical genocide was consciously employed by the European colonialists across the Empires, Anderson and Frideres (1981) point out that, within the Canadian context, cultural genocide was the preferred method.

> [P]hysical genocide has never been a popular strategy in Canada and has not been widely used by the dominant group. What has been a more popular and acceptable strategy has been to force the group to take on specific dominant values and culture (cultural genocide) (p. 266).

In other colonial settlements around the globe, the voluntary use of physical genocide by imperialists also gradually declined in popularity. For example, in his presidential address to the annual meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science in Sydney in 1932, Sir Hubert Murray relayed how physical genocide is no longer the means by which to maintain order but rather cultural genocide is now the more "civilized" approach.

> [I]t is recognised nowadays that the old methods of slaughter and slavery were not only inhuman but also unscientific....Native races are no longer deliberately exterminated, and the possible methods of dealing with them have been classified as subjugation, assimilation, and association. Subjugation may be said to be a thing of the past, and assimilation is perhaps the method of the future....We are not trying to make the brown man white; we are trying to make him a better brown man than he was before....[W]hatever method you are going to adopt, whether it be assimilation or anything else, your first duty is the establishment of order....(Murray, 1933; cited in Bodley, 1988, p. 43).

Ethnological scholar, Lord Fitzroy R.S. Raglan (1885-1964) views regarding tribal policy also supported the current ideological trend of cultural genocide as the "humane" tool to civilize the "savage" in the name of "progress."

> [S]avagery and superstition are a plague that anthropologists must help eradicate to make the world safe for progress and civilization....[This] can be achieved in two ways only, that is to say, by improving the best and by eliminating the worst, and by the worst we can only mean that which is the least humane, rational, and scientific....The worst evils of the day arise from the survival of savage beliefs, and of the habits of mind with which such beliefs are associated. We can never be really civilized until we are all civilized....Our proper course, then, in dealing with the savage races of our empire is to try to civilize them as rapidly as possible....[W]e should bring to them our justice, our education, and our science (1940; cited in Bodley, 1988, pp. 114-115).

With the demise in popularity of physical genocide, education served as an imperative tool for the colonizers to "assimilate," "progress," "move into the mainstream," "integrate," "civilize," (whatever the preferred terminology) the colonized, and as Carnoy (1974) points out "all the authors who write about colonialism deal, explicitly or implicitly, with education" (p. 69). Local traditional culture and educational models that transmitted culture specific values and skills to sustainably ensure future membership of that society were assailed by colonialists, and a Western model of education that was "primarily designed to serve the (political, economical, social, and cultural) needs of the colonizers" and not the colonized, was institutionally imposed (Altbach and Kelly, 1978, p. 2; Mondlane, 1983; Potter, 1992). There were two main colonial schools systems; the sophisticated government schools and the rudimentary missionary schools. The former catered predominately to the "whites" and the latter to the "coloureds." The educational policies of the missionary schools were religiously motivated and centred around redeeming the evils within indigenous social systems by destroying them and replacing traditional culture with something "higher; Christianity" (Sifuna, 1990, p. 51) to "lead the *indigena* gradually from a life of savagery to a civilized life" (Mondlane, 1983, p. 61). These sentiments stemmed from, and received strong reinforcement from the pseudo-scientific biological and cultural theories that emerged during the height of European colonization. However, it must be noted that the goals and objectives of colonial education were not solely about "civilizing" the Natives. To the colonizer, the colonized was a source of economic human labour for their annexed cash-crop agriculture (tea, coffee, cotton, and other crops) and raw material extraction. In employing the human resource development model then, in which human labour impacts economic growth, academic education was therefore not deemed necessary for the colonized who were consciously trained to primarily do field and/or manual labour for the colonialists (Altbach and Kelly, 1978). As a result, the colonizers did not structure the educational system with the intent of bringing out the potential abilities of students as they were external to the political economy of the colonizer's modernization paradigm and economic expansionism (Foley, 1978; Zachariah, 1985). Furthermore, because non-Europeans were deemed intellectually inferior to the European, it was believed that they were better suited for vocational training. In the African case,

> [t]he increased attention given to the measurement of cranial capacity in reputable "scientific" circles reinforced a growing belief in African inferiority; all the studies were said to have indicated that the capacity of the Negroid skill and brain were less than those of the Caucasian. Some missionaries refused to countenance such beliefs, but the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, provided more ammunition for the proponents of African inferiority. Africans were therefore relegated to a position of inferiority on the scale of human development. Although many missionaries continued to insist on the perfectability of the Africans amongst whom they laboured, many more shared the racist vision of

> Africans as semi-barbarians, incapable of attaining European standards. The impact of these theories on missionary education was no doubt profound. The belief in African inferiority and depravity led many to conclude that Africans and their American descendants could not possibly benefit from an [academic] literary education. Rather their education should be geared towards those manual occupations more attuned to their arrested development and childlike bearing. Vocational education, it was argued would help combat the well-observed African characteristics of indolence and depravity (Sifuna, 1990, pp. 51 and 52).

The educational infrastructures and policies developed and controlled by missionary schools premised on pseudo-scientific racist theories were imperative assimilatory tools for the alteration and conversion of the indigenous peoples' cultural identity within the imposed dominant "white" culture. Altbach and Kelly (1978) point out how the imposition of the colonialists' model of education was both irrelevant and alienating to the everyday lives of the indigenous non-European children and youth.

> ...[I]n the colonial situation the school was detached from indigenous cultures in the languages and in the social values they taught. Colonial schools were set up as alternatives rather than as complements to the colonized's educational practices. Colonial schools never held out the prospects of integration into indigenous culture to those who attended them; neither did they prepare the colonized for leadership in their own society....The colonizer established the schools to fit people into a world different from the one in which they were born and in which their parents lived and worked....[P]arents had no role at all in determining educational content, even that part of the curriculum that emphasized indigenous culture....The colonial school was an alien institution, alien in the sense that whatever it taught had little to do with the society and culture of the colonized, either purposely or unwittingly, and served as a mechanism whereby the schooled would gain a new social place and a new culture rather than be prepared to work within the context of indigenous culture (pp. 3 and 4).

For example, an examination of Jamaica's colonial schools' core curriculum policies and practices in 1847 overtly outlined the assimilatory practices embedded within schools. The following core areas were focussed on and extensive usage of the Bible as a resource was used.

> Religious education – to inculcate the principles and promote the influence of Christianity;

> English language – to spread a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization for the coloured population of the colonies;
> A knowledge of writing and arithmetic – to enable the peasants and labourers to adjust to their everyday life;
> Agriculture – presumably to enable children of small farmers to know how to conserve the soil (Gordon, 1963);
> Relationship with authority – the reading books of colonial schools should teach mutual interests of the mother-country (England) and her dependencies, the rational basis of their connection and the domestic social duties of the coloured race." (Core Curriculum Unit, Ministry of Education, 1990).

Lastly, history in the colonial schools was taught through the eyes of the colonizers. "Primitive" chaotic images of the local society before the arrival of the Europeans was conveyed from a Eurocentric perspective. Prior to the existence and imposition of Euro-colonial schools, the historical and cultural roots of respective societies were taught within their own particular models of education and were reflective and embedded within the context of their own society and institutions. Children learned about their respective heritages and roots which instilled a sense of pride in one's collective identity and sense of belonging (Furley and Watson, 1978). In their attempt to socially and culturally transform the colonized, the colonizer's transmitted an incomprehensive and distorted view of indigenous history.

> What history was taught revealed a devaluation of indigenous cultures. History in the main, if it touched on the colonized's past, was only the history of the colonized since they were ruled by Europeans. If precolonial history was touched on, it usually emphasized, through chronology, civil wars, tribal conflict, famines, and barbarism in order to contrast them with the peace and orderly progress under colonial domination (Altbach and Kelly,1978, p. 14).

This resulted in the colonized internally questioning the value and validity of their own history, culture, and identity.

If the development of colonial schools to annihilate indigenous culture and assimilate the colonized for their new role in the colonizer's world failed, the use of physical force was still very much an option. As Carnoy (1974) states

> The acceptance of the colonial situation by the colonized is crucial to the colonial enterprise. In the modern pyramidal state, and the modern imperial relation, schooling plays an important role in obtaining this

> acceptance. But if schooling and other forms of moral suasion (including the media) are not sufficient, force is still a very real option for the colonizer (p. 69).

MODERN CANADA'S HISTORICAL ROOTS OF RACISM

"Canada, a settler colony built upon the back of a pre-existing Aboriginal community by French and British settlers" (Abu-Laban, 1998, p. 69; Dickson and Wotherspoon, 1992), praxied itself on these biological and cultural schools of thought and practices (Hughes and Kallen, 1974). Canada's colonial foundation and legacy must remain central to understanding its recent modern evolution given that its social, political, cultural, demographical, and economic institutions were deliberately shaped and developed by racist laws, policies, and practices (Henry, et al, 1995, p. 1). This is well acknowledged and documented in the social science literature among leading Canadian academics (Bolaria and Li, 1988; Driedger, 1996; Fleras and Elliot, 1992, 1996; Frideres, 1988, 1993, 1998; Henry, Tator, Mattis, and Rees, 1995; Kallen, 1995; Satzewich, 1992; Ujimoto and Hirabayashi, 1980) and is by no means a new finding within the discourse of historical and contemporary Canadian "race" and ethnic relations.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, as the capitalistic colonial enterprises were exploiting and securing raw materials from the First Nations Peoples, mass immigration of "British, Scots, English and Protestant Irish, together with many Roman Catholic Irish" Anglophones (Morton, 1981, p. 8) was consciously shaping Canada's demographically desired white population (Fleras and Elliot, 1992; 1996). The British colonialists believed that they themselves would "best" set the standard for Canada's future and all future Canadians (ibid). This conviction was echoed and supported by many clergymen who "believed that God was on the side of a white man's country…and intended the Anglo-Saxons to have possession of Canada and the United States" (Roy, 1989, p. 231). Upon gaining its independence in 1867, Canada's nation building campaign began aggressively thereafter during the latter and early part of the twentieth century. A sufficiently large labour pool was necessary for Canada's development and "white" immigrants from all European countries were actively sought based primarily on their comparatively assimilable[4] biological and cultural traits (Tulchinsky, 1994). Their "white" "racial" construction, in comparison to non-whites, coincided with the government's aim of keeping Canada white (Bolaria and Li, 1983; Henry et al., 1995) and culturally, they were believed to be more assimiable than non-whites given their geographical closeness to the imperialists' homeland. As Baureiss (1987) explains

> desirability of immigrants was (also) determined by how quickly they were thought to give up their cultural traits and assimilate to the Anglo-Canadian life style. The more culturally diverse people, it was assumed, were less likely to assimilate. In fact, immigration polices reflected an ordering of people of diverse ethnocultural backgrounds measured by the deviation from middles class values and Anglo-Canadian traditions. Consequently, preference was given to the British, the French, the western and northern Europeans, in that order. Other "whites" were less favoured, but people with distinct biological difference, such as Blacks and Orientals (East Indian, Japanese and Chinese) were thought to be unassimilable (pp. 17-18).

It must be noted, as stated above, that a hierarchical scale of desirability among Europeans existed given the absence of homogeneity between, within, and among ethnic groups (Bhabha, 1994; Bock, 1988; Hall, 1990; Hooks; 1990, 1994; Said, 1993). The "racial" and ethnic desirability scale of Canadian colonialists

> ...held several gradations. There were two or more different types of Europeans or "whites." Italians, Poles, and Jews were thought to be inferior to other Europeans but not as inferior as "peoples of colour" – Chinese, East Indians, Japanese, [B]lacks. At the bottom of the scale were the peoples whose ancestors had been in the country long before the French and English arrived (Tomic and Trumper, 1992, p. 164).

This belief was also embedded within the government as H.H. Stevens, a conservative Member of Parliament for British Columbia publicly stated in 1911 that

> the immigrant from Northern Europe is highly desirable, the immigrant from Southern Europe is much less so, and the Asiatic, I wish to emphasize this, is entirely undesirable (Ferguson, 1975, p. 40; cited in Tomic and Trumper, 1992, p. 164).

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[4] According to Baureiss (1987), "[a]ssimilation, in its political context, meant assimilation *to* the dominant (White Anglo-Saxon) group and not the merging of two or more diverse ethnic groups (p. 17).

Nevertheless, compared to non-whites, all white Europeans were still deemed the more favourable immigrant given their "racial" and cultural amalgamable characteristics. This sentiment was asserted in the *Saturday Sunset* newspaper "White Man."

> [E]ven the riffraff of the white race that Europe sends can be boiled down into a decent Canadian citizen in a couple of generations at least, but an Oriental does not change (7 October, 1911; cited in Roy, 1989, p. 231)

Between 1900 and 1910, 1.7 million immigrants came to Canada with the significant majority being of European descent (Statistics Canada, 1983). The 1910 Immigration Act which was based on an assimilatory model (Malarek, 1987)

> ...gave immigration officials wide discretion to exclude almost any prospective immigrant on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, and creed. Differential treatment based on race and ethnicity was firmly established as government policy. (Furthermore) a list of preferred and non-preferred countries was established, and selection was carried out on the basis of whether applicants were from those countries on the "preferred" list: those with affinities to the United Kingdom and United States. Next in preference came immigrants from northern and western Europe, followed by those from central and eastern Europe, and then those from southern Europe. A special permit class included immigrants from Greece, Syria, and Turkey, and European Jews (Bolaria and Li, 1988; cited in Henry et al, 1995, p. 73).

From 1911 to 1914, 1.23 million immigrants arrived mainly from Europe. During World War I and World War II, immigration decreased slightly, and began to steadily increase between 1946 and 1954, after the second World War (ibid). At this time, approximately one million immigrants were admitted to Canada, of which 96 per cent came from Europe (Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1965). These figures are clearly reflective of the Canadian government's position regarding non-white immigration as indicated by Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie's statement in which he declared that "...the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass migration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population" (Baureiss, 1987, p. 19). Between 1954 and 1967, 83 per cent of all immigrants admitted to Canada were European (Li, 1996). As indicated by the figures, immigrants to Canada were not entirely of European origin. When sufficient labour could not be secured from within Canada or from other "white" European countries, non-white ethnic groups were imported into the Canadian Empire for their inexpensive and reliable labour (Abu-Laban, 1998b; Bolaria and Li, 1988; Li, 1988; Ward, 1978). The latter was premised on the design that "once these labourers outlived their usefulness they would leave Canada. (But) [d]espite the clear official (social, political, and economical) intention to send them back, some of the Chinese, East Indian, and Italian workers stayed" (Tomic and Trumper, 1992, p. 165). To stop further entry of non-whites to white Canada, the Canadian government consciously devised "immigration law[s] [systematically] from 1885 until 1962 [that] w[ere] explicitly racist in wording and intent: [as] non-white, non-European immigration was openly discouraged and/or prohibited" (Taylor, 1991, p.2) by the Canadian government. For example, after the Chinese constructed and completed the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1881 and 1885, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 was immediately devised by the Federal government placing $50 head tax on every Chinese immigrant wishing to enter Canada as a means of restricting and regulating Chinese immigration to Canada (Roy, 1989; Warburton, 1992). By 1900 the head tax was raised to $100 and by 1903 to $500 to ensure permanent exclusion of Chinese in Canada (Ferguson, 1975) given the strong social and political conviction of maintaining and championing a "white" Canada.

> This is a white man's country and white men will keep it so. The slant-eyed Asiatic with his yellow skin, his unmanly humility, his cheap wants would destroy the whole equilibrium of industry, he would slave like a Nubian, scheme like a Yankee, hoard like the proverbial Jew. Turn these people loose in a country like ours and they would make progress like a pestilence. Race prejudice! This is race prejudice of course…Let them swarm in once and the yellow stain on the country will be one that cannot be rubbed out. They are an honest, industrious, but hopelessly inferior race (*Saturday Night*, September 8, 1906; cited in Paupst, 1977, p. 57).

When it became obvious that the immigration of Chinese to Canada was not stopping, the British Columbia government put forth many demands to the Ottawa government which was slow to respond given that it had imperial interests to consider with other countries. Under increasing pressure from the province's government, the Canadian Parliament passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which completely banned Chinese immigration from 1923 to 1947 (Bolaria and Li, 1988); the very group that had significantly contributed to the nation building of Canada. The eventual withdrawal of this policy in 1947 was "not a result of accepting human rights in general and the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights in particular [but] [r]ather…because China had become a Western ally against the Japanese in World War II (Baureiss, 1987, p. 19). Upon revoking this policy, Prime Minister McKenzie King "made it clear that the government had no intention of 'removing the existing regulations respecting Asiatic immigration unless and until alternative measures of effective control have been worked out'" (King, May 1, 1947, pp. 2644 – 6; cited in Taylor, 1991, pp. 5-6).

In the case of the Japanese, they arrived in Canada in the 1870s and were subjected to economic exploitation, disenfranchised, discriminatory housing, segregated schools and public places (Adachi, 1976) similar to other Asian immigrants. Unlike other Asians, political support was given to the Japanese by the federal government during 1877-1907 given the Anglo-Japanese Alliance between Britain and Japan (Bolaria and Li, 1988). In response to a significant increase in the number of Japanese entering Canada (as well as other Asians; Chinese and East Indians), a stable organization known as the Asiatic Exclusion League was formed to actively exclude all Asians from the province (Adachi, 1976; Bolaria and Li, 1988). In 1907, this systematized League carried out a major demonstration which climaxed into the worst "race" riot in British Columbia's history (Adachi, 1976; Bolaria and Li, 1988; Roy, 1989). Shortly thereafter, the "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1908 was formed in which the immigration of Japanese to Canada was restricted to an annual maximum of 400 (Adachi, 1976, p. 81). Then in 1922, this number was further reduced from 400 to 150 (Bolaria and Li, 1988, p. 135). During World War II, Anti-Japanese feelings among white Canadians was explosive. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941 resulted in the Canadian government issuing orders to relocate, deport, seize property, and the internment of Japanese people under the provisions of the War Measures Act. This Act gave the Canadian government "the power to arrest, detain, and deport persons" (Ungerleider, 1996, p. 11) of Japanese origin, including Canadian-born and naturalized citizens. As Sunahara and Wright (1979) point out

> [i]n the seven years between 1942 and 1949 Canada's 23,000 Japanese Canadians – over half of whom were Canadian born and two-thirds of whom were Canadian citizens – were uprooted from their homes in British Columbia, confined at their own expense in detention camps, stripped of their property, and forced to disperse across Canada or be shipped to a starving Japan, although they had committed no crime (p. 78).

Up until 1947 when the Japanese Canadians were released, "conditions of virtual apartheid existed for Japanese Canadians…but no Japanese Canadian was ever charged with sabotage or any other kind of disloyalty before, during, or after the war" (Henry, et al, 1995, p. 70). As Sunahara (1981) summarizes

> …underlying these considerations were the racist attitudes prevalent among politicians, bureaucrats, and the public: the manifest superiority of the Caucasian race and its "natural" obligation to rule "inferior," less endowed, non-white peoples (cited in Henry, et al, 1995, p. 70).

Similarly, people from India came to Canada at a time when hostility against Asians and non-white immigration was high. Hostilities which the mere presence of these earlier Asian immigrants ignited among the whites was carried over to the East Indians as they too were received unwelcomingly by the Canadian government despite the fact that Canada and India were part of the same British Empire, and Canadians and Indians served the same sovereign (Buchignani, 1977; Jagpal, 1994; Raj, 1980; Singh, 1994; Singh, 1995). The importation of East Indian labour to Canada within the British Empire was a structural necessity for Canadians given the abolition of slavery in Canada in 1833 and the legal complexity associated with importing "Other" labour across the globe. The Indians, who themselves were British citizens, were a guaranteed source of cheap indentured labour for colonial Canada. As Li (1988) points out

> [t]he labourers recruited under the indenture system were known as 'coolies,' and they worked under conditions not dissimilar to those of slavery. Indian workers inherited all the features of plantation slavery" (Tinker, 1974; Sandhu, 1969). Generally, the nature of the work required of indentured workers was not clearly stipulated. Even if the work was intolerable, they had no freedom to withdraw from the contract. The worker could not change his employer or place of employment. Breach of contract was placed in the category of criminal liability. They system clearly had many of the characteristics of slave labour (Gangulee, 1947; Kondapi, 1951). The general attitude of the British colonial government was that Indians were accepted as a labouring or subordinate class and not as competitors with European interests. As Sir Thomas Hyslop, a South African planter said: "We want Indians as indentured labourers but not as free men" (Kondapi, 1951: 7) (p. 163).

It must be noted that as with all colonized countries, the emigration of Indian citizens was not entirely voluntary. The imposition of British colonial rule in India resulted in a drastic symbiotic collapse of the Indian way of life. Citizens were no longer operating on a self-sustainable subsistence based economy but rather a large scale commercialized market economy controlled by, and for, the capitalistic British Empires. As a result, masses of Indian men[5] were compelled to seek their livelihood elsewhere via self-exportation. Li (1988) discusses the social, political, and economical climate the Sikhs entered Canada into.

> The bonded Indian labourer was sent overseas to serve the interests of the colonial masters, who despised him. The statutory colour bar was in operation in many colonies, providing a series of political, economic and social restrictions to maintain the supremacy of the ruling classes (Gangulee, 1947). Economic exploitation "lies mainly at the root of racial problems and brings into play the colour bar in social and political relations. The colour bar is, in truth, an economic weapon" (Gangulee, 1947). Indian workers bore the brunt of exploitation (Tinker, 1976) (p. 164).

The East Indians[6] began arriving in Canada in 1897 with the bulk of Sikh settlement occurring in 1902 "when it became evident that consistent work was available in the Port Moody sawmills" (Dodd, 1907; cited in Buchignani, 1977, p. 87). The small number of Sikhs (5,000 by 1908) were viewed with the same "racial" hostility and resentment as the other non-white immigrants (Raj, 1980; Singh, 1994). "To ensure Anglo-Saxon supremacy, [government] legislation was [deliberately] enacted to control the economic and social mobility of South Asians and to [actively] prevent more from coming" (Henry, et al, 1995, p. 71). In 1907, the British Columbia government officially disenfranchised the Sikhs who were rightfully British subjects and passed a policy requiring South Asians to have $200 in their possession upon arrival in Canada (ibid; Singh, 1994). In 1908, The Continuous Passage Act which Ottawa originally invoked to keep away Japanese migrants from Hawaii (Raj, 1980), was subsequently applied to the East Indians. This Act stated that

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[5] Non-white male individuals were recruited and emigrated abroad as indentured labourers. Wives and families were not considered as a means to prevent further generations of non-whites in Canada (Fleras and Elliot, 1996; Raj, 1980)

[6] [5] "Nearly all the early East Indian immigrants were Sikhs, natives of the Punjab and adherents of Sikhism, a reformed religion founded by Guru Nanak in the 15th century A.D. The beliefs and practices of Sikhs considerably differed from those of the Hindus. Although nearly all the early East Indian immigrants were Sikhs, the dominant society simply called them all Hindus, perhaps to differentiate them from Amerindians" (Raj, 1980, pp. 65-66).

> the Governor-General in Council may...prohibit the landing...of any immigrants who have come to Canada otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of which they are natives...(Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 28 April 1933, p.4423; cited in Raj, 1980, pp. 67-68).

This Act was extremely effective in preventing further entry of East Indians to Canada as there was no direct steamship service or any other direct mode of transportation between India and Canada. On May 23, 1914, 400 Sikh immigrants arrived at Vancouver's shore aboard the Japanese freighter steamship called the Komagata Maru. Passengers were not allowed to disembark and denied entry because of this Act "thereby expos[ing] the racist subtext of this law" (Fleras and Elliot, 1996, p. 75; Jagpal, 1994; Johnston, 1989; Singh, 1994). The Sikhs were determined to challenge Canada's Colour Bar and claim their right to the same treatment as the white citizens of the British Empire. Gurdit Singh, who organized and lead the voyage of the Komagata Maru stated the following to the Canadian press which was covering this highly publicized incident.

> We are British citizens and we consider we have a right to visit any part of the Empire. We are determined to make this a test case and if we are refused entrance into your country, the matter will not end here (Johnston, 1989, pp. 37-38).

During the Sikhs'[7] appeals to the Canadian courts, the passengers were interned aboard the steamship for nearly three months before it was forced to return to India. In addition to ensuring inhumane living conditions during their imprisonment on the steamship (one passenger died, many others fell ill), the Canadian government employed its own strategy to ensure deportation without causing international attention (Singh, 1994). With directions from the Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden

> ninety passengers were falsely declared to have trachoma, a non existent disease, and therefore ineligible as immigrants (Singh, 1994, p. 48).

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[7] "It was not long before the Khalsa Diwan Society got involved in the dispute [of the Komagata Maru]. This society, an organization founded in 1907 to manage the affairs of the Vancouver [G]urdwara and later the other temples, represented the Sikhs in Canada, acting on their behalf in matters that involved any agency outside the community. Officials of the Society and Sikhs from the local temple appealed to the government's sense of justice, asking that the immigrants be allowed to land. The Vancouver Sikh community even promised to pay the required $200 per person. But the authorities would not relent. Only twenty-two Sikhs, all former residents of Canada, were allowed to land" (Jagpal, 1994, pp. 32-33).

> [Another]…suggested solution to the problem that was seriously considered with the corridors of power, was the idea of kidnapping the *Komagata Maru* passengers and returning them to the Orient aboard a Canadian Pacific line, the *Empress of India.* The scheme was rejected by the Prime Minister on the grounds that it might cause bloodshed (Singh, 1994, p. 51).

On July 17, 1914, the passengers were served with deportation orders. To ensure the removal of the Sikhs , what is known as the Battle of Burrard Inlet occurred on Canada's shore. As Singh describes (1994)

> On July 19, Malcolm Reid (head of the immigration party) decided to storm the *Komagata Maru* subdue the passengers and sail the ship out to international waters….Around one A.M. a strike force of one hundred twenty-five police officers with revolvers, accompanied by thirty-five special immigration officers armed with rifles, boarded the tug *Sea Lion.* The contingent was headed by Malcom Reid and Hopkinson (immigration official) along with a number of newspapermen. Stevens (Member of Parliament) went also. The moment the *Sea Lion* reached the *Komagata Maru* they found that the *Sea Lion's* deck was fifteen feet lower than [the] *Komagata Maru['s].* The strike force was at a terrifying disadvantage. An attempt to board the ship was met with a solid line of Sikhs four deep that manned the railing Police launched the attack by tossing grappling hooks up at the ship's railing and used high pressure hose. The Punjabis responded with a hail of lumps of coal, bricks, scrap metal, hardwood, and knives from the deck. This furious defence by Sikhs caused a panic on the *Sea Lion* as the strike force fled for cover. Thirty raiders were injured. The *Seal Lion* almost capsized. This riot lasted ten minutes. Malcolm Reid ordered the *Sea Lion* to retreat. The *Sun* praised the police department's "admirable coolness and courage" and referred to Punjabis as "barbarians." (pp. 50-51).

The next day, under the supervision of agricultural minister Martin Burrell (Prime Minister Borden sent him) the Canadian government employed physical intimidation.

> The cruiser *Rainbow* made its appearance and moved close to the *Komagata Maru.* It was half of Canada's navy. Soldiers with fixed-bayonets aimed at the unarmed passengers to coerce them to leave. The spirits of the passengers were low and they were fearful. The Sikhs started recitation of the *Guru Granth Sahib* (the Sikh holy book)….[On] July 23, 1914, the *Komagata Maru* under the *Rainbow* convoy set sail out of Vancouver harbour after two months stay. The naval officers stood by the hefty weapons facing the *Komagata Maru.* According to O.D. Skelton, Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier's biographer, it is ironic, that the use of Canadian navy (Cruiser *Rainbow*) against the *Komagata Maru,* was to stop British subjects from landing on British soil (Singh, 1994, p. 51).

From 1909 to 1947, the Canadian government effectively barred East Indian immigration[8].

It must be noted that the importation of non-whites to Canada did not first occur within the latter part of the nineteenth century but rather as early as 1608 when the Blacks were first "imported" by the French and forced into slavery (Bolaria and Li, 1988). "Contrary to popular belief, slavery has been as much a part of the Canadian experience as it has been of that of the United States" (Tulloch, 1975; Walker, 1980; Krauter and Davis, 1978; Clairmont and Magill, 1970; cited in Bolaria and Li, 1988, p. 187) with the first Canadian slaves being the Native peoples who were referred to as "panis" (Bolaria and Li, 1988, p. 187). "Until the early nineteenth century – throughout the founding of the present Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Ontario – there was never a time when Blacks were not held as slaves in Canada" (Walker, 1980; cited in Henry et al, 1995, p. 64). By the 1820s, slavery was nearly abolished in Lower Canada and in the Maritimes (Tulloch, 1975) and the size of the Black population continued to remain static within Canada (Anderson and Frideres, 1981). It is estimated that in 1860, there were approximately 60,000 Blacks in Canada (Bolaria and Li, 1988, p. 191). However, after the American Civil War ended in 1865 many emigrated back to the United States from which they had temporarily fled (ibid). During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Black settlement in Canada increased to 18,291 in 1921. Like other non-whites during this time period, the entry of Blacks into Canada was also severely restricted, but indirectly, despite an already existing history on Canadian soil. For example, although the Canadian government was seeking farmers from the United States, they had clearly informed the Immigration Branch of the federal Department that "the Canadian Government is not particularly desirous of encouraging the immigration of negroes" (Shepard, 1991, p. 17; cited in Henry et al, 1995, p. 65). Instead of overtly denying Black American applicants entry, immigration officials "rejected them on medical or other grounds rather than race" (ibid, p. 66). For those who had remained in Canada, they lived in largely segregated communities. "The Ontario legislature established segregated schools, legal challenges to this segregation failed, and separate schools continued…until the 1960s (Winks, 1971; 1978; cited in Henry et al, 1995, p. 66). The legacy of slavery for Blacks rooted and reinforced by the pseudo-scientific concept of "race" produced a low status and an ideological heritage unfavourable to them for years to come (Alexander and Glaze, 1996; Bolaria and Li, 1988; Thomson, 1979).

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[8] For a comprehensive and first hand account of Sikh settlement to Canada, please refer to Jagpal's book Becoming Canadians: Pioneer Sikhs in their own Words (1994).

Unlike the passing of formal legislation which restricted Black, East Indian, Chinese, and Japanese immigration to Canada, the Canadian government chose an insidious approach by employing an informal "ideological" administrative measure in which the entry or non-entry of Jews was left in the competent hands of each respective immigration authority (Henry, et al, 1995). Between 1933 to 1945, many Jews sought refuge from the persecution of the Nazis outside of Europe. During this period, the United Kingdom opened its doors to 70,000 Jews and allowed another 125,000 into British-administered Palestine, Argentina took 50,000, Brazil 27,000, Australia 15,000, and more than 200, 000 Jewish refugees found refuge in the United States. Because Canada's refugee policy did not distinguish between its "overtly racist" immigration policy, Canada accepted less than 5,000 Jews (Abella and Troper, 1991, p. xxii) while simultaneously turning away boatloads of Jewish refugees that arrived at its ports during the Holocaust. The entry of these approximately 5,000 Jews occurred in response to political pressures both internally and abroad as opposed to human rights concerns (Tomic and Trumper, 1992).

Lastly as highlighted in the previous segment, the social, political, cultural, economical, and educational treatment of the First Nations Peoples by the European colonizers' historically and contemporarily must remain central to understanding the foundation of Canada's birth. Presently, many issues pertaining to the Natives' national and human rights, which are rooted in an exploitative history, remain unresolved within settler-colony Canada (Frideres, 1998).

Therefore, from 1885 to 1962, Canada's immigration law was explicitly racist in wording and intent…discourag[ing] and/prohibit[ing]…non-white, non-European immigration (Taylor, 1991, p. 2) while simultaneously favouring immigration from European countries (Abu-Laban, 1998a). Up "until 1957, non-white, non-Europeans constituted only about 5% of immigrants" in Canada (Taylor, 1991, p. 5). Between 1958 to 1962, non-Europeans constituted 8% of Canada's entire population; this increased to 14% during 1963 to 1967 (Taylor, 1991, p. 5). In 1962, under the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker, a law was codified for a more *universal criteria* of admission which was rooted within a capitalistic framework (Abu-Laban, 1998a). The significance of this new policy rested in the fact that the focus of citizen selection was not based on the individual's "race" but rather was based on the applicant's "education, training, skills or other special qualifications [and how] likely [the applicant was] able to establish himself successfully in Canada" (ibid, p. 74) and how much he could contribute to the political economy of industrial Canada (Henry, et al, 1995). In 1967, "a universally applicable point system" (Canada, Manpower and Immigration, 1974a, pp. 33-34; cited in Abu-Laban, 1998a, p. 75) was created that capitalized on the arguments made in the 1966 *White Paper on Immigration* in which it was argued that the entry of immigrants must be universally applicable and no longer continue to discriminate on the basis of "race", colour, and religion (ibid). What prompted these changes in the wording of Canada's immigration policy given that they had been in place from 1885 to 1962? And why? Racism theorists argue that the changes in the regulations are "cosmetic changes only…[and] [t]he likely sources of pressure to reform the law were external to the bureaucracy" (Taylor, 1991, p. 4).

> Within Canada these pressures came from protest, legal challenges and lobbying by ethnic and immigrant groups. Outside of Canada, pressure would come from the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, British Commonwealth members and other international bodies. The 1962-67 regulation changes may have been little more than an inexpensive and easy concession to pressure from outside Canada.

As Cohen (1988) and others point out, these overt changes in the wording of Canada's immigration policy were under the guise of being universally applicable and non-discriminatory but the administrative procedures employed were orientated around differential treatment and "racial" discrimination. For example, the number of immigration posts abroad are disproportionately distributed among European and non-European countries as well as the processing time. As Abu-Laban (1998a) states

> …the fact remains that potential immigrants continue to have differential access to immigration posts abroad, with disproportionately more posts existing in European countries and the United States than in the Third

> World. For example, in 1992, there were 64 Canadian immigration Missions: 5 in Africa; 15 in Asia; 13 in Latin America; 19 in Europe (including Moscow); 11 in the United States; and 1 in Australia (Canada, Employment and Immigration, 1992)....Moreover, the research also suggests that there are lengthy differences between how long it takes to process applicants in many Third World countries and how long it takes to process those in western countries (pp. 77-78).

Similar findings were reported with regards to visa offices in which there was a disproportionate distribution of offices, as well as a difference in the length of processing times of applications (Henry et al, 1995). Furthermore, the contemporary organizing principle of Canada's immigration policy which emphasizes particular skills coupled with the point system is not value-free. The nine socially constructed indicators such as education, occupation, and knowledge of official languages reflect the prevailing Canadian political and economic power structure (Abu-Laban, 1998a; Fleras and Elliot, 1990; Bai, 1993; Driedger, 1996). This can be seen with the emphasis on knowledge of French and/or English, for example, which are not the primary languages of these "Other" countries, thereby causing a decrease in the totality of potential points earned towards entry. Another example remains largely in the hands of individual immigration officers who "were given wide latitude and discretion, which allowed for individual prejudices and even overt racism in their decisions" (Henry, et al, 1995, p. 77; Taylor, 1991).

> For example, the point system's "personal suitability" category requires immigration officials to assess an immigrant's "adaptability, motivation, initiative, resourcefulness and other similar qualities" and entitles the officer to evaluate the applicant's cultural background and personal style. The officials, however, lacked an objective method to assess the qualifications that potential immigrants had acquired in other jurisdictions, especially developing countries (Malarek, 1987; cited in Henry, et al, 1995, p. 77).

This lack of training and objectivism among officers "left plenty of room for implicit racism to operate [as] there was no reduction in the discretion exercised by immigration officials" (Taylor, 1991, p. 4). Such covertly subtle exclusionary policies, carried forward from a historically assimilatory model, indicate a bias towards Europeans as "only the most Europeanized of non-Europeans" (Taylor, 1991, p. 4) are admitted. These systemic administrative procedures "suggest that while [Canada's] immigration policy is officially non-discriminatory, there are, nonetheless, sanctioned practices that act in a discriminatory manner with respect to the geographical location, and hence, the ethnic/racial background of potential immigrants" (Abu-Laban, 1998a, p. 78).

Although the number of Europeans immigrating to Canada declined somewhat since the 1980s (Driedger, 1989; Taylor, 1991; Ungerleider, 1996) as a result of post-war recovery which resulted in greater economic stability in Europe, immigration from "Africa, Asia, South and Latin America, and the Caribbean [has] increased" (Ungerleider, 1996, p. 13) given Canada's demand for a highly educated and skilled workforce which could and can not be numerically be supplied by Europe alone. It must be noted that to date, the number of immigrants from these non-European countries combined are still severely low then when compared to the number of Europeans that were consciously and actively admitted prior to the 1980s (ibid, Driedger, 1996). Today "immigration is essential to Canada's survival. The decline in fertility rate has changed the age structure in Canadian society from a broad base of young people, to a rapidly increasing group of middle-aged and older people....[W]ithout...immigration...Canada's population would disappear 800 years from now" (National Health and Welfare, 1989, p. 2, 44; cited in Ghosh and Ray, 1995, p. 9). Just as in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the twentieth century, and at the turn of the twenty-first century, Canada continues to be shaped by immigration and immigrants which continue to make a productive contribution to the economy (Grant and Oertel, 1998). The following section examines the contemporary social climate of immigrants and descendants of immigrants in post-colonial, multi-"racial," multi-ethnic, multi-cultural Canada.

CANADA'S PRESENT POST-COLONIAL SOCIAL CONTEXT

Despite Canada's historically explicitly racist immigration policies and practices and the continued residue in preventing equal entry of non-whites to Canada, the reality remains that Canada's demographical pattern is altering at a measurable rate. According to the latest available Canadian statistics, Canada's total population has reached 30,301,200 as of 1998 (Statistics Canada website, 1999). "If present immigration trends continue, visible minorities...(non-whites, non-Europeans)...are destined to reach 9.6 per cent of Canada's population by 2001" (Samuel, 1998; referenced in Fleras and Elliot, 1990, pp.58-59). According to Statistics Canada "[b]y 2005,…the proportion of 'visible minorities' will rise to 16% of the national population from 12% in 1996. By 2016 the number will rise to 20%" (Time Magazine, 1999).

Canada's official proclamation to the world as a distinctively multicultural country as evidenced by the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy and then the legislative passing of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988 has created on the surface, a political and social climate encouraging cultural retention, tolerance, and treating all citizens fairly and equally. "Multiculturalism represents but one of the policy options open to central authorities for coping with diversity. Other devices such as assimilation or integration have been tried, but were found to be inadequate in balancing societal needs with those of diversity. A multicultural arrangement recognizes the reality of cultural diversity and validates its legitimacy at cultural, political, economic, and social levels" (Fleras and Elliot, 1996, p. 328). Briefly,

> [t]he concept of multiculturalism is based on the assumption that political and ethnic differences can be reconciled through a policy on multiculturalism – the notion of one nation/many people/many cultures. This ideal assumes that all collectivities, irrespective of one's ethnic identity, are both able and willing to maintain their ethnocultural distinctiveness. This implies that all ethnic collectivities are characterized by high levels of ethnocentrism, but that they are willing to adopt a 'laissez-faire' stance towards ethnocultural collectivities whose values and lifeways differ markedly from their own (Kallen, 1982, p. 52). Following from this, the assumption is that the degree of prejudice and discrimination between ethnic groups are low and hence, there is mutual tolerance (Alladin, 1993, p. 126).

Despite the existence and governmental commitment of an official multicultural policy, there are a number of reports and studies that indicate significant public concern around multiculturalism and immigration. For example, an article in the *Toronto Star* (14 Dec. 1993) indicated that

> nearly three quarters of Canadians interviewed rejected the notion of this country as a multicultural nation. Sixty-two per cent of respondents expressed the opinion that people should 'adapt' to the value system and the way of life of the majority (read: White Anglo-Christian) in Canadian society.' Forty-one per cent of respondents believed that Canada's immigration policy 'allows to many people of different cultures and races to come to Canada.' Almost 50 per cent agreed with the statement: 'I am sick and tired of some groups complaining about racism being directed at

> them,' while 41 per cent agreed that they are 'tired of ethnic minorities being given special treatment' (cited in Kallen, 1995, p. 33).

"Recent polls by Angus Reid Associates and others suggest that

> with increasing numbers of visible minorities entering Canada, prejudice and discrimination is on the upswing. Across Canada, Canadians are increasingly resisting those visible immigrants who do not blend in readily with the mainstream population....[Yet] Canadians are positive in their attitudes towards those immigrants who can make a contribution to Canada's economic prosperity, and they are receptive to immigrants who come to Canada to be reunited with close family members. (Frideres, 1992, p. 64).

Frideres (1992) points out the conflictual attitudes held by some Canadians and concludes that although Canadians are "supportive of multiculturalism...they express serious reservations about new, visible ethnic groups coming into Canada and maintaining a cultural identity in isolation from resident Canadians" (ibid, p. 65). In the 1991 government Multiculturalism Attitude Survey, Canadian respondents in a focus group were asked "to indicate their comfort level with a variety of different groups of immigrants" (Ungerleider, p. 45, 1996; Driedger, 1996). The results revealed that Canadians are most accepting of, and comfortable with, non-visible minorities (British, Italians, and French), and then with visible minorities (non-whites) that "wear standard Canadian clothing (Chinese and Blacks) and the least with those that continue to wear traditional ethnic costumes..." (ibid., p. 45; Driedger, 1996). Sikhs who differ significantly in appearance from the dominant group, are the least accepted group according to this survey (ibid). Ungerleider (1996) concludes that "increased 'visibility' leads to decreased tolerance" (p. 45). This orientation echo's the "scale of desirability" found in Canada earlier this century[9]. Ramcharan (1982) suggests that this discriminatory behaviour in Canada can by analyzed from two perspectives – "the colour-class" and the 'stranger' thesis - which can be operating simultaneously for many people.

> With regard to the colour-class thesis, the supposition is that the majority groups in the society identify nonwhites with the lowest social class mainly because of the historical relationships between whites and

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[9] Berry et al,'s (1975) highly profiled "Majority Attitudes Study" found that a "hierarchy of acceptance among the majority groups was towards those who were similar to them; they were perceived to be insiders as opposed to outsiders

> nonwhites. The stranger thesis sees the nonwhite immigrants as archetypal stranger both in appearance and behaviour, and react to them with distrust, antipathy, and a resultant negative attitude (p. 88).

Jeffrey G. Reitz and Raymond Breton, two of Canada's prominent sociologists, conducted a study in which Canadians and Americans responded to questions in areas such as their beliefs about the Mosaic and the Melting Pot, attitudes towards the retention of minority cultures, prejudice and discrimination, education, and employment (1994). Generally, the results revealed that Canadians are still unaccepting of visible minority groups, and feel that cultural retentions poses as a major threat to national identity and social cohesion. Furthermore, the majority of Canadians denied that they were overtly racist, however, their responses to the other questions led the researchers to conclude that Canadians were still prejudice despite the decrease in overt behaviour. As Fleras and Elliot (1996) explain

> [f]ew people at present will tolerate the open expression of racial slurs. Blatant defamations were routinely hurled at minorities in the past; the risk of social or legal consequences serves as an inhibitor nowadays...But while blatant forms of racism have dissipated to some extent, less candid expressions of bigotry and stereotyping remain in force...[as]...racist slurs ("those kinds of people...") are now couched in a way that allows us to talk around or disguise our criticism of others by using somewhat more muted (polite) tones...Polite racism then can be seen as a contrived attempt to disguise a dislike of others through behaviour that outwardly is non-prejudicial in appearance. This politeness is especially evident when people of colour are ignored or turned down for jobs, promotions, or accommodation on a regular basis (Henry and Ginzberg, 1985) (p. 74).

A decrease in the overt racist behaviour which has been supplanted by the contemporary covert approach, coupled with the existence of an official multicultural policy have some members of the dominant group convinced that racism and discrimination based on "race" no longer exist (Baird & Rosenbaum, 1992; Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993; Sleeter, 1991; Smith, 1998) while simultaneously dismissing and/or denying their differential treatment towards non-whites (Cannon, 1995; Fleras and Elliot, 1992; 1996; Henry et al, 1995; McKague, 1991; Razack, 1998). "In an 1989 survey conducted by researchers at the University of Toronto and York University, it was found that 70 per cent of the general population felt that immigrants often bring discrimination upon themselves" (Gould, 1990; cited in Henry, et al, 1995, p. 87). They believe that so-called disadvantaged members of society are no longer oppressed and any problems they are having are their own doing. Brickman and his colleagues (1982) described this model as the "moral model" in which the victim is blamed and viewed "responsible for both their own problems and their solutions; the rest of society is absolved of responsibility, and the "have-nots" are supposed to pull themselves up by their bootstraps out of problems presumed to be of their own making" (cited in Sleeter, 1991, p. 3). This orientation ignores the principle of historical specificity, as it dismisses the extensive history of rooted "racial" oppression in post-colonial Canada (Bolaria and Li, 1988; Frideres, 1998; Razack, 1998). As Henry et al, (1995) point out

> Canada suffers from historical amnesia. Its citizens and institution function in a state of collective denial. Canadians have obliterated from their collective memory the racist laws, policies, and practices that have shaped their major social, cultural, political, and economic institutions for 300 years (p. 1)

Increasingly within the contemporary discourse on "race" and ethnic relations, the cultural differences model has gained popularity (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Unlike the biological differences model which excluded and inferiorized on the inherent biological inferiority of non-whites, the cultural difference model attempts to explain encounters and relations between dominant and subordinate groups as "fresh," unmarked by histories of oppression (Razack, 1998, p. 8). In her book, *Looking White People in the Eye,* Razack (1998)

> challenge[s] the widely held view that relations between dominant and subordinate groups can be unmarked by histories of oppression, as so many cultural diversity theorists, educators, and legal practitioners presume. Without history and social context, each encounter between unequal groups becomes a fresh one, where the participants start from zero, as one human being to another, each innocent of the subordination of others. Problems of communication are mere technical glitches in this view, misunderstandings arise because the parties are culturally, racially, physically, mentally, or sexually *different*...[One] need[s] [to] learn to navigate their way through these differences, differences viewed as unchanging essences, innate characteristics – the knowledge of which enables us to predict behaviour (p. 8; see also Bolaria and Li, 1988).

In reality, people are diverse and possess culturally specific practices, however, the culturalization of racism, the superficial reading of differences, and the invisibility of power relations is what makes the cultural differences model inadequate (ibid).

Today, in Canada's socially and politically conscious environment, the social and biological construction of "race" still exists at the turn the twenty-first. American physical anthropologist Earnest Hootens' (1946) formulation of three primary divisions of humans; Caucasian, Mongoloid, and Negroid, which are then further subdivided into intermediate types to account for the complex variation is still being used fairly extensively today in the "race" discourse despite its major limitations. As Ujimoto and Hirabayashi (1980) point out

> [A] major problem with this classification is that large numbers of the world's population do not fit the scheme, such as the East Indians of south Asia, the aboriginal Native Indians of the two Americas, and most of the Pacific Polynesians and Melanesians. The South Asians from the subcontinent of India represent roughly one-fifth of the population of the world and they seem to fit the Caucasian type in most respects, except that their skin colour is considerably darker. They are classified as Caucasian, but since skin colour is often considered so important by other whites, they are often treated as coloured or visible minorities (cited in Driedger, 1996, pp. 236).

Furthermore, the distribution and maintenance of "The Race Question" in the Edmonton Journal (Sunday January 14, 1996), in which citizens were asked to "check off" which "race"/ethnic category they belonged to, is also indicative of the "race" concept's survival within Canada. The identification categories within this survey were political constructs with ambiguous boxes. An overview of the article revealed that non-European nationalities were individually listed, whereas the construct of white was an entire entity that encompassed all Europeans ancestries, much like the ideology held earlier this century. Statistics Canada said it was "collecting the data to get a clearer picture of the country's visible minorities" (p.1); the precise purpose and intent of the data collection was not stated.

Today in the New World, contemporary Canadian sociologists have categorized the presence of three kinds of peoples (Saram, 1995). First there are the "Aboriginals," who are the original inhabitants of the land. Second "the founder," "the colonials," "charter group," and/or the "state-makers," who within the Canadian discourse are of

French ancestry and British ancestry. The third group is referred to as "ethnics," "immigrants," and "new comers," who are generally perceived as foreigners, and not as residents, regardless of whether they are born in Canada or not (ibid). Up until the mid 1950s, this third category included Europeans not of French or British ancestry. However, as non-Europeans immigration increased in the 1960s, visible minorities were targeted and slotted in the "immigrant" category on the basis of their distinctive non-white physical appearance. Europeans, other than the charter groups began to "pass" as those of the more dominant group (Burnet, 1979, p. 205; cited in Saram, 1995), as previously predicted and desired among the early colonials, thereby escaping the "racial" labelling and ranking so prevalent in Canada. Today these three categories still exist, but a fourth is required which rightfully reflects the effects of the post-colonial experience as "the popular image of an immigrant in Canada is typically of someone who either does not speak French or English, or speaks with an accent, holds a menial job, and is non-white" (Abu-Laban, 1998a, p. 196). A study conducted by Lalonde et al. (1992) indicated that ethnic minorities believe that Canadian society values the label "Canadian" more than the label "immigrant" and that such labelling implies different levels of "inclusion" and "exclusion" respectively (referenced in Moghaddam, Taylor, Pelletier, and Shepankek, 2000, p. 269). A study conducted by Moghaddam and Taylor (1987) which examined how non-white women in Montreal perceived themselves in Canadian society revealed that

> …these women perceived themselves more as "Canadians" and less as "immigrants" than they believed majority-group Canadians perceive them. Importantly, the longer these women lived in Canada the more they felt that they were viewed by majority-group as outsiders. (cited in Moghaddam, Taylor, Pelletier, and Shepankek, 2000, p. 269).

The researchers interpretations of the above findings indicate that "women who have lived in Canada longer have greater opportunities to experience discrimination and, consequently, are more likely to believe that they are perceived as outsiders" (ibid, p. 269). It must be noted that when examining and attempting to understand the social interactions of individuals, the intersections of individuals' "race," culture, and gender need to be considered and accounted for given the variety of nuances associated with the construction of individual identities as pointed out by hooks (1990) and Bates, et al, (1995).

Up to this point, this chapter has "draw[n] historical connections between international colonialism, [the] treatment of non-white immigrants as colonial subjects, and the pattern of racial domination and exploitation" (Bolaria and Li, 1988, p. 127) in Canada and how it "continues to be…racist…in organization and consequence if not intent, though there is evidence of collective denial and historical amnesia about this (Philip, 1995; Henry et al, 1995; cited in Fleras and Elliot, 1996, p. 86). Canada's racist heritage has bequeathed to both earlier and present generations a powerful set of perceptions and behavioural patterns regarding relations between dominant and subordinate groups of society (Henry et al, 1995) which continue to cause a rift generation after generation in the social cohesion of "multicultural" Canada as evidenced by the research findings of Canadian social scientists.

EDUCATION AND SCHOOLING

Historically schools and teachers were employed as agents of socialization that transmitted the world view of the dominant culture. As previously outline, Canada's First Nations Peoples and Other non-colonial immigrants groups were assimilated into the dominant(ing) culture as the cultural retention of students' heritages were discouraged during the colonial era (Ghosh, 1996; Moodley, 1983). Earlier this century then "the function of schooling was to change societies from primitive stages of evolution to complex civilized stages, as if the process were linear" (Ghosh, 1995, p. 4) as reflected by the prevailing social and political ideologies of that time. In the 1930s to the 1950s "the function of schooling was to maintain the class structure by preserving the opportunities and educational levels of privileged classes through sorting students and streaming them to different fields and levels" (Ghosh, 1995, p.4). In the 1950s the emergence of the modernization paradigm shifted the function of education in which modern attitudes and values were championed. Students were being prepared to economically participate in the modern sector with the promising potential for social mobility and enhanced quality of life. In the 1960s, because it was deemed that an educated labour force was an efficient mechanism to bring about social change that would result in a prosperous and economically viable society, personal development did not factor highly into the equation. Throughout the entirety of Canada's educational history, addressing the issues of racism and diversity and creating a multiculturally inclusive school environment were absent from the agendas of educational institutions as the assimilatory model, rooted within a Eurocultural framework, was considered the most suitable irrespective of the presence of diverse "racial" and cultural groups.

Today just as in the past, "racial" and cultural diversity exist within Canadian classrooms but in slightly larger numbers given Canada's diverse multicultural history, and changing immigration trends. The development of the official 1971 multicultural policy as well as the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act,* have facilitated moderate systemic changes within education in the last two decades as multicultural education has found its way in some schools across the Canada (Alladin, 1993, 1996). "The introduction of multicultural education has redefined how schools relate to the presence of diversity…[and] has also raised questions about the form, function, and processes of formal education in a racially and culturally plural society" (Fleras and Elliot, 1996, p. 375). Multicultural education has been defined by Fleras and Elliot (1996), as

> encompass[ing] a variety of policies, programs, and practices for managing management of diversity within the school setting. It can encompass the study of many cultures or an understanding of the world from diverse perspectives or convey how power and politics are inextricably connected with unequal group relations. Additional perspectives include healthy identity, cultural preservation, intercultural sensitivity, racism awareness, and cross-cultural communication. Issues related to social equality and equity are also recognized, in theory if not always in practice (p. 375).

Furthermore as Giroux (1994) points out

> The discourse of multiculturalism [and multicultural education] represent in part the emergence of new voices that have been excluded from the histories that have defined our national identity. Far from being a threat to social order, multiculturalism in its various forms has challenged notions of national identity that equate cultural differences with deviance and disruption (p. 341).

Lastly, Price (1992) summarizes multiculturalism as basically entailing

> …learning about the multiplicity of the heritages that comprise Canada, and appreciating and celebrating Canada's multicultural nature. What this

> strategy amounts to in the classroom is learning about the habitats, customs, the histories and the different literatures of all the cultures hitherto present in the curriculum. The intent behind multicultural education is to demonstrate that cultural differences are a positive thing, and that they should be recognized, and respected (p. 10).

A core concern surrounding multicultural education is the lack of clarity in its precise meaning and practice amongst different educators. As Suzuki (1984) points out

> many widely differing conceptualizations of multicultural education have been formulated. As a consequence, the various programs in the field often appear to have conflicting purposes and priorities. Many educators have come to view multicultural education as ill defined, lacking in substance, and just another educational fad” (p. 294; cited in Sleeter, 1991, p. 9).

For a significant majority of educators, multicultural education is practiced in schools through “food fairs, costume shows, and window-dressing contributions by people of colour (Sleeter, 1991, p. 9) by those who are unfamiliar with the praxis but nevertheless well-intended (Sleeter, 1991). For others, it is related to providing ‘space’ within the school program to address the issues of “race”, class, and gender identity, thus helping students to construct empowering identities (Carlson, 1995).

In recent years, multicultural education, which focuses primarily on the attitudinal celebration of cultural differences (Ghosh, 1996; Nieto, 1992), has been expanded in response to its shortcomings which overlook the every day systemic racism entrenched within policies and practices of institutional structures that directly impact members' lives (Dei, 1996). As a result, anti-racist education emerged encompassing a unique set of objectives that set it apart from multicultural education. As Fleras and Elliot (1996) explain

> While multicultural education is merely intolerant of racism in its practice, anti-racism seeks to actively eradicate racism through awareness, challenge, and confrontation. At one level anti-racist education is concerned with equalizing minority presence in the centre of the curriculum; providing a platform for minority stories to be told in their own voices; the acquisition of critical tools to understand and challenge racism inequality; questioning the white-centredness of school knowledge as the only legitimate form of culture; and employing this knowledge as a basis for action (Allingham, 1992; Mukherjee, 1992; McCaskill, 1995). At another level, anti-racism is concerned with the identification and

> removal of discriminatory barriers, both personal and systemic, at interpersonal and institutional levels (p. 378).

Both multicultural education and anti-racist education are not only for the non-white groups but rather, for all groups and individuals living in multi-"racial" and multi-cultural Canada. Because all citizens of Canada, with the exception of Canada's First Nations Peoples, are immigrants and/or descendants of ethnocultural immigrants non-whiteness and

> whiteness cannot remain invisible and outside the framework of multiculturalism...(as) [a] significant goal of multicultural education is to teach all children critical consciousness so that they can question the conditions in society that allow inequalities to exist within the democratic rhetoric of social justice (Ghosh, 1996, p. 2)

As a consequence of Canada's historical colonial foundation, "multiculturalism is a fact in Canadian society and in Canadian schools" (Roe, 1985, p. 5). In addition to socializing and transmitting culture, preparing students for the workplace, consumerism, citizenship, and improving Canada's competitive edge, reproduce the social order, with the addition of self-actualization and individual self-development (Fleras and Elliot, 1992, p. 305, 1996; Contenta, 1993; Sleeter and Grant, 1988) "[t]he multicultural reality is [also] significant for schools because educational institutions are responsible for preparing all students to participate fully in a multicultural society" (Ghosh, 1995, p. 8; Ghosh, 1996; Alladin, 1996; Ramcharan, 1987) given its permanence within Canada's social fabric. Because it is assumed that the educational system is dynamic and reflective of the times, this thesis investigates the knowledge, views, beliefs, and perceptions of high school students regarding "race" relations upon the immediate completion of high school given the historical and contemporary views regarding "race" relations between white and non-white groups.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This study did not pattern a particular qualitative tradition but was orientated around qualitative methodological principles. I was most attracted to qualitative methodologies not only because they are the most appropriate in uncovering and making sense of the complexity associated with human and social relations (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992) at a given point in time, but they enabled the students' voices to take centre stage within the context of my study given that "what is spoken about relates to reality" (Carson, 1986, p. 64). The social world is composed of multiple individually constructed realities and diverse perspectives. Yet too often in the discourse of student race relations among academics, policy makers, school administrators, teachers, educators, board members, project teams, and governments the students' voices are generally peripheralized. These voices should not be disregarded particularly when implementing policies and practices given the students' expertise to express their own social reality. In employing qualitative methods, first-hand perspectives, experiences, and insights were generated by students which would have been difficult to elicit with quantitative research methods. My overall purpose in conducting this social investigation was not to predict, hypothesize, or test a theory but rather to understand "what meaning and what significance the social world has for the people who live in it" (Gilbert, 1993, p. 7).

SAMPLE SELECTION

The participants in the study were *purposive*ly sampled. The criteria for sample selection were based primarily on grade level, and “race.” The participants in my study were all grade 12 students attending a local Edmonton public high school. Grade 12 students were intentionally sought out as the objective of my study was to investigate the knowledge, perceptions, and experiences of students regarding 'race" relations within Canada upon the immediate completion of high school. A total of 41 students participated and completed the survey questionnaire of which 34 were white and 7 were non-white. A total of 10 students were then selected for the interviews from the 41 students solely on the basis of race; 5 white and 5 non-white. Non-white students of various races were purposely chosen to obtain a wide range of non-white insights. It is important to stress here that the number of non-white students to select from in comparison to the number of white students was very minimal, as evidenced by the numbers, due to the school's demographical composition. To avoid the gender variable from factoring into the equation, a total of 5 males and 5 females were used in this study.

GAINING ENTRY INTO A RESEARCH SITE

Conducting research within a school based site was an imperative component of the research study given that the investigation centered around high school students' perspectives and realities. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), the natural setting is the direct source of data collection as opposed to laboratories or other researcher-controlled sites where people can not engage in natural behaviour. In addition to this, the natural research site allows for various qualitative data collection methods such as observation, participant observation, informal unstructured interviewing, and structured interviewing to be employed. However, accessing a high school site was extremely challenging. The proposed study was strongly resisted by all of the school administrators I had contacted (24 in total). I noted that when I presented "racial" and cultural diversity as my area of interest, the majority of Principals became antagonistic in their tone and language and instantaneously ended the conversation. Some did not see the *"need"* to be concerned with an *"irrelevant"* area within the education system as they dangerously relayed a "colour blind" explanation in which they insisted that "race" does not factor into students' schooling experience. A few Principals who did engage in a brief dialogue with me believed that *"ethnic"* students' *"culture"* was primarily responsible for the instability in their schools, as they perceived these ethnic students were not quite adjusted to *"Canadian society"* regardless of their length of time in Canada thereby employing a cultural deficit model. Although this time consuming procedure did not result in gaining entry into a research site, I nevertheless benefited from these interactions as they provided me with invaluable insights as to how the reality of "race" is viewed at the institutional/administrative level.

Through the collaborative efforts of Dr. Ingrid Johnston, who has reputably worked on numerous research projects at Woodendoors Composite High School (pseudonym), I was able to gain entry into a public high school. I met with the school Principal at which time we discussed in detail the proposed study. After reviewing the research proposal and my statement of intent to Edmonton Public Schools, without hesitation he agreed to the study and Marie's participation in it.

Marie is head of the English department at Woodendoors Composite High School. She has worked with Dr. Johnston on a number of research projects, and had expressed a strong interest in this research study. Prior to entering her classrooms, Marie and I arranged an appointment at which time we reviewed the exact nature of my research. Together, we concluded that the data would be collected with two of her English 30 classes. Within the context of this study then, Marie was the *gatekeeper* who had insider status with the desired population and lead me to them (Creswell, 1998). Gaining access through a gatekeeper was very beneficial as Marie's connection with the study was influential in conveying its importance to her students (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Prior to my arrival on the site, Marie had informed her classes of my expected presence along with a brief introduction of the study to prepare the students.

PRIOR TO DATA COLLECTION

A formal pilot study was separately conducted with two grade 12 students who were currently enrolled in an Edmonton public high school. 1 non-white male and 1 white male were introduced to me through a colleague. Prior to conducting the pre-planned research design, the project, the students' involvement, and the ethical guidelines were explained to each volunteer. First a questionnaire was administered and then an interview was immediately conducted. In constructing the questionnaire, I was most concerned with the over and under simplification of the language, conceptual level, and terminology, as I wanted to formulate "information-getting" questions while simultaneously maintaining a compatible researcher-participant vocabulary (Smith, 1975,

p. 171). Carrying out a small-scale testing of the drafted questionnaire was very useful as it "provide[d] space for [the] respondents to make criticisms and recommendations for improving the questionnaire" (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996, p. 298). Immediately following the volunteers' feedback from the questionnaire, an interview was then conducted. Given the importance of the students' voices in this study, the pilot interview provided me with the opportunity to remain attentive to my interviewing style to ensure the elicitation of the students' responses rather than distorting and misleading the conversation by imposing my paradigmal lenses. As Seidman (1991) argues

> The pilot can alert [researchers] to elements of their own interview techniques that support the objectives of the study and to those that detract from those objectives....Without a thoughtful structure for their work, [researchers] increase the chance of distorting what they learn from their participants (Hyman et al., 1954) and of imposing their own sense of the world on their participants rather than eliciting theirs (p. 30).

With the student volunteers' permission, interviews were tape-recorded. The sole purpose of this was so that I may critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of my interviewing technique to ensure the students' perspectives are being elicited and not mine.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection consisted of a total of three phases. The first phase of the study entailed administering a survey questionnaire. The second phase of the study was observational, and the third phase involved in depth interviewing.

Throughout the entire three phases of data collection, I kept a reflective tape recorded journal. I vocally relayed the daily agenda, my perceptions, interpretations, contradictions, and thoughts regarding observations, interviews, the progress of the research process, the school environment, and the students. This was invaluable to me, as it enabled me to express and sort through the overwhelming weight of the data and keep my thoughts focussed both during and after the data collection.

i) The Survey Questionnaire

An *open-ended* (Palys, 1992) survey questionnaire was administered to the students in their respective classroom (Please refer to Appendix 1). According to

Marshall and Rossman (1995), "survey research is the appropriate mode of inquiry for making inferences about a large group of people from data drawn on a relatively small number of individuals from that group" (p. 96). From the surveys, data regarding the students' perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and opinions (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996) regarding their own and others' “racial” and cultural identities in Canada, and at school were gathered.

Prior to distributing the questionnaires to the students I introduced myself, explicitly outlined the research study, and highlighted their significant contribution and role. I consciously avoided the use of academic jargon throughout the entirety of the research study presentation to prevent detraction (Agar, 1980). Students were notified that their involvement was strictly voluntary, their identities will remain anonymous, and they may abstain from completing the questionnaire at any time. During the course of my explanation, questions were welcomed and concerns were clarified.

The *group-administered questionnaire* (Palys, 1992) was inevitably selected as the means of administration given that the students were already together in the classroom. Questionnaires were distributed after my introduction in order to prevent possible external influences, such as students discussing the questions with one another, from factoring in. Students were given the remainder of the class period (50 minutes) to complete their responses under my supervision. This was an adequate amount of time for students to reflectively respond to the questions as indicated by the pilot.

ii) Participant Observation

Prior to interviewing, Marie had strategically planned two weeks of group work for the students which involved discussions around a short story they had read called "Happy Event" by Nadine Gordimer. The story's theme centered around “race” relations and the unequal relationship between a Black South African woman and a white South African woman during the South African apartheid. I actively facilitated each of the individual group discussions with students as they expressed their views regarding the various social realities that emerged within the context of the story. This direct interaction allowed students to become better acquainted with me and set the stage for rapport building. During the groups' discussions and presentations, I observed all students' conduct, behaviour, and conversational content as they dealt with the issues encompassing "racial" inequality.

Objectively speaking, I did not perceive my presence in the classrooms and interactions with the students as disruptive to them. In fact, I believe they considered me more of a peer/classmate rather than a University researcher primarily due to my appearance. I am often mistakened to be a high school student rather than in my late twenties. I dressed like the majority of students, carried a school bag, sat in the desks, entered and exited when the English classes would begin and end, parked in the student parking lot, and so forth. Under no circumstances was I intentionally posing as a high school student but because I blended in I was perceived as one. I believe this image was very nonthreatening to the students as I did not appear to be the "know-it-all" researcher from the University. In the pilot study, volunteer *A* and *B* had both brought this factor to my attention as they relayed their ease and comfort with my appearance.

Some informal observations were made unobtrusively in the students' natural setting which allowed me to observe more "real-life" situations (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996). I informally observed the social milieu and "racial" relationships among all students while "participating" in school. Some follow-up observations were also carried out as part of the validity process to substantiate whether what the interviewed students stated corresponded with the actual social context.

iii) In-Depth Interviews

Interviewing was the basic mode of inquiry within the framework of this study. Although questionnaires were administered, they did not adequately convey the students' feelings, experiences, and perceptions in depth (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996). In depth interviewing proved to be a powerful tool for me to gain deeper insights into the lived realities and views of each student (Marshall and Rossman, 1995; Palys, 1992; Seidman, 1991). Coupling the interview with the questionnaire was advantageous as the interviews compensated for the lack of depth and elaboration accomplished by the questionnaire (Palys, 1992)

The interviewing process began two weeks after my arrival into the classroom. Participant's who circled "yes" to question number 27 in the questionnaire were pooled together and categorized as possible interviewees (total 24 out of 41; approximately

58.3%). All 24 students received consent forms along with parent/guardian consent forms if they were under the age of eighteen (Please refer to Appendixes 2 and 3 respectively). Students were given a maximum time period of 2 weeks to return their signed forms. A total of 16 signed forms were returned. Students were then broken down into "racial" categories. There were 5 non-white students and 11 white students to select from. White students were further divided along the lines of gender (8 females and 3 males). Based on these formulated categories, I ultimately chose students that I sensed were comfortable around me.

A total of 10 students were independently interviewed. Seven out of the ten students were interviewed twice as planned, two students were interviewed three times as not all of the interviewing was completed, and one student was interviewed once as a result of his constrained agenda. Some interviews were conducted during class time as per Marie's request, while others were conducted during students' spares, lunch hours, and after school so long as the students were not inconvenienced and Marie was notified. All interviews were conducted at the school site at locations that students had requested. One student in particular, Rose, had insisted that we go to her car during our second interview as she felt *"more freer"* expressing her views in seclusion. The remainder of the non-white students also preferred isolated locations, typically the basement, whereas the white students typically said *"it doesn't really matter, where ever."*

The interviews' duration ranged from 67 minutes to 134 minutes based on the students' individual idiosyncrasies, and were all tape recorded with the participants' permission. Prior to interviewing, each student was notified of his/her right to withdraw from the interview at any time, even after the interviews had been completed and no harm or consequences will result. The first interview was *semi-structured* as students were asked to elaborate on their responses to the questionnaire. Although an interview guide was used, I continuously adapted to the students' state of mind and explored the areas they led me into. In the second interviews, all individual students were asked specific questions pertaining to their first interview that needed clarification. I also shared my analyses from our previous interview and asked each student for their respective confirmation and asked further questions if necessary. After clarifications were made and interpretations were shared, each interview took its own distinct shape given the individualism of each individual student. The second interviews were more conversational in which no "linear logic" was imposed as newly introduced topics were "picked up on" and asked for further explanation (Barthes, 1978; cited in Carson, 1986). The amount of personal information sharing between myself and the participants varied with each particular students' idiosyncrasies. There were times when I was acumenic and chose not to insert my perspectives particularly when I shared a different perspective, as I did not want to impose my position. For example, Mike, was adamant about people knowing and speaking solely English and/or French in Canada in both the public and private spheres as he did not see the purpose of the existence of other languages. As a fluent English and Punjabi speaker, who can also communicate in Hindi and Urdu, my own experience has taught me that being multilingual is more of an asset than an impediment compared to being monolingual. In contrast, I observed that sharing and relating a common experience(s) and perspective(s), only strengthened the insights I gained from the students as comprehensive discussions resulted. For example, Rose, was discussing how she does not feel *"as good as white people."* I openly shared with her that I too use to feel the same way at her age, and talked about a couple of experiences. This, and other similar viewpoints, not only built trust between Rose and I but it laid the foundation for an intimate exchange of information as she knew her perspectives would be validated rather than dismissed and interrogated.

During the course of our interviews and conversations, I noted that three of the white students, Rodney, Mike, and Carrie, were reluctant to share their views particularly within the realm of Canada's multicultural composition and immigration. When they did share their views their responses were inconsistent. I chose not to address their contradictions during the first interview as I felt that I did not want these students to feel interrogated or monitored. In the second interview however, I asked each student to clarify which of the two inconsistent responses accurately reflected their views. I also felt that it was necessary at that precise moment to once again inject a dose of trust by reassuring the students of their anonymity given that sensitive questions were being asked (Fowler, 1993). I also encouraged the students to espouse their views and opinions by clearly stating *"which ever of these are your views, you are by all means entitled to them. There are no right or wrong answers when sharing your views and opinions."* From that point on, their responses remained consistent for the remainder of the interview and they became less dissonant.

I believe the white students' reaction to the interview process revolving around “race” and culture was probably directly related to my own physical identity as a "Non-white" person. They were discursive as they were perhaps searching for an appropriate response to say to the "Other." Seidman (1991) discusses the differences in “racial” backgrounds among interviewers and participants and argues that society's history of racism makes it difficult for researchers and participants of different “racial” backgrounds to establish an effective interviewing relationship. However, he asserts that this can be subverted if the interviewer "can create a relationship that runs counter to prevailing social currents [by] maintaining sensitivity to issues that trigger distrust as well as exhibiting good manners, respect, and a genuine interest in the stories of others..." (p. 77). These were principles I had employed during the interview, as I did have a genuine appreciation for the insights their responses provided. Despite our different “racial” identities, the white students and I shared in common a similar "Canadian" upbringing which bridged certain differences and strengthened our rapport. In addition to this, my personality and perceived high school image also facilitated a good rapport as it was non-threatening.

DATA VALIDATION

The validity construct refers to the extent the data gathered are credible, trustworthy, authentic, and accurate and measure what is to be measured rather than supporting an interpretation. Because qualitative researchers have "no single [systematic] stance or consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity [they have]...relate[d] traditional notions of validity...to the procedures in qualitative research" (Creswell, 1997, p. 157; see also Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) as they reconceptualize validity within the new research paradigm. In borrowing validity concepts from the positivist paradigm, Reason and Rowan (1981) suggest "refining" and "expanding" them in ways suitable to "an interactive, dialogic logic" (p. 240; cited in Lather, 1986, p. 66).

To give confidence in the "trustworthiness" of the data, I employed the techniques of triangulation, member checks, and reflexivity as suggested by Guba and Lincoln

(1981). That is, I used multiple data collection methods (interviewing, survey questionnaire, and observation) to corroborate the research findings, I had each individual student review copies of the text for "accuracy" and "completedness" (Borg, Gall, and Borg, 1996), and I acknowledged my own biases and preconceptions (please refer to Chapter I) prior to constructing the survey and conducting the interviews. Acknowledging the latter prepared me to look for similarities, differences, and accept contradictions that emerged. Other checks employed included careful consideration given to the development of trust and rapport between myself and the students, along with the assurance of complete anonymity and confidentiality of any personal information obtained in all phases of the research. All of these procedures and strategies were systematically employed to ensure the authenticity, credibility, and trustworthiness of the data.

THE PARTICIPANTS

i) The Survey Questionnaire Participants

A total of 41 grade twelve students completed the survey questionnaire. 34 students were white and 7 students were non-white. Of the 34 white students, 30 identified themselves as *"Canadian"*, 2 identified themselves as hyphenated Canadians, and the remaining 2 identified themselves according to their country of birth as both had immigrated to Canada approximately 7 years ago. Of the 7 non-white students, 6 had identified themselves as hyphenated Canadians, while the remaining student identified himself as a hyphenated British.

ii) The Interviewed Participants

A total of 10 grade twelve students were interviewed. 5 out of the 10 participants were white and 5 were non-white students of various Non-European backgrounds. 6 students were born in Canada; 4 white and 2 non-whites. The remaining 4 students, 1 white and 3 non-white, immigrated to Canada during their elementary school years. All of the participants resided in Canada and were not temporarily enrolled in school for study purposes.

I have taken the liberty to introduce the “racial” and cultural identities of the students interviewed in this study to prefamiliarize the reader with each distinct student prior to engaging in the findings chapters. The students' profiles have been compiled based on the individual participants' responses in their questionnaires and during the course of their interviews.

Rodney

Rodney is an eighteen year old white male who was born and raised in Canada, and defines himself as a *"Canadian."* His father was born in England and his mother is born in Canada and is therefore an amalgamation of various European groups. Rodney considers his Canadian identity a *"very important"* part of his life and does not acknowledge his European roots (from both parents) in Canadian society and says *"I am proud of what I am and where I live."* He feels that he has a *"strong"* understanding of his Canadian roots and feels that it is *"very important"* for him to maintain his Canadian values.

Mike

Mike is a seventeen year old white male who was born and raised in Canada, and defines himself as a *"Canadian."* He stated *"I feel that I am 100% Canadian rather than English Ukrainian, Russian, etc. These backgrounds don't really matter to me. I am Canadian."* His mother and father were born in Canada and his grandparents on both sides were the first in his family to immigrate to Canada shortly after the Second World War.

Faith

Faith is a seventeen year old white female who was born and raised in Canada, and defines herself as a *"Canadian."* Although her mother was born and raised in Canada both of her mother's parents immigrated from France. Faith's father was also born and raised in Canada and his parents both immigrated to Canada from Germany. Faith's European roots are not important to her and as she said *"my background isn't the most important aspect of my life nor is it the most important aspect of me."* She understands the Canadian part of her roots because she is *"Canadian and maintains [her] values in [her] own way."*

Carrie

Carrie is an eighteen year old white female who was born and raised in Canada, and defines herself as a *"Canadian."* Her father was born in England and her mother was born and raised in Canada. Carrie considers her Canadian identity a *"very important"* part of her life and acknowledges her connection to Europe because of her father. For Carrie, *"being Canadian is first and foremost."*

Peter

Peter is a seventeen year old white male who was born in Yugoslavia and immigrated to Canada in 1992 at the age of eleven. He defines himself as *"Ruthenian."* Both his mother and father were born and raised in Yugoslavia. Peter considers his Ruthenian identity a *"very important"* aspect of his life and feels that it is important for him to maintain the Ruthenian in him. He stated *"these values are me....They are based on what my parents and grandparents believed; there's pride in there."*

Phylicia

Phylicia is a seventeen year old non-white female who was born and raised in Canada. Her mother was born in Trinidad and her father was born in Jamaica. Although Phylicia has been in Canada her whole life, she defines herself as a *"Jamaican Canadian from the Caribbean Islands."* This is primarily due to the cultural transmission of both Trinidadian and Jamaican values to her by her parents which she feels are an important aspect of her life. In spite of having a moderate understanding of her Jamaican and Trinidadian background, Phylicia said *"I'd like to always remember who I am, and what my background is."*

Rose

Rose is a seventeen year old non-white female who was born and raised in Canada. Both of her parents were born and raised in Vietnam. Although Rose considers herself Canadian, she defines herself primarily as *"Vietnamese"* due to her "racial" construct; she chooses to define herself as a Vietnamese-Canadian. Her understanding of the Vietnamese culture is moderate but she feels that it is important for her to maintain her Vietnamese identity as she stated *"it is what I am, where I am from."*

Sapna

Sapna is a seventeen year old non-white female who was born in Fiji Islands and immigrated to Canada in 1987 at the age of 6. Both of her parents were born and raised in Fiji Islands, Nadi. She defines herself as a *"Canadian-Hindu."* The Canadian component of her identity stems from being raised in Canada for the majority of her life.

Her Hindu identity is based on her upbringing at home and within the Hindu community which transmits Hindu social and cultural values. Sapna feels that she has a *"strong"* understanding of her Hindu identity and felt that the retention of her Hindu identity is a *"very important"* aspect of her life.

MR2

MR2 is an eighteen year old non-white male who was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada in 1985 at the age of 5. Both of his parents were born and raised in Hong Kong. He defines himself as *"Chinese-Canadian."* Although he has been in Canada for the majority of his life, he strongly identifies with his Chinese culture and regards it as a *"very important"* aspect of his life.

David

David is an eighteen year old non-white male who was born in London, England and immigrated to Canada in 1989 at the age of 9. Both of his parents were born and raised in India. He defines himself as a *"British-East Indian-Sikh."* David's understanding of his East Indian values are moderate along with his desire to retain them.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The process of interpreting data related to the social world can not be discussed without taking into account researcher subjectivity which is rooted in "tradition" (Gallagher, 1992). Because data analysis is "the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding" (Bodgan and Biklen, 1992, p. 153), it is inevitable that one brings in their own historical situatedness while interpreting the data. As Gallagher (1992) states

> the process of tradition is, in effect, within us. In this process we do not deal with tradition objectively, as external and bygone phenomena. They shape what we are and how we understand the world. The attempt to step outside of the process of tradition would be like trying to step outside of our own skins. The pretention to escape the process would lead to a misunderstanding of both the worlds and oneself. A genuine understanding of the world involves not the attempt to escape tradition but a participation in the happenings of traditions (p. 87).

Therefore, a denial of our biases and preconceptions only aid in constraining our understanding of reality. Given my personal connection to the research study as discussed in Chapter I, acknowledging rather than denying my own biases as they surfaced during the interview process and while interpreting the transcribed data was extremely constructive in facilitating my understanding of the data generated. I not only "participated" in my own biases, but I was able to transcend to other location(s) and engage myself with the students' voices and digest all of their perspectives undiscriminatingly.

Upon the completion of the interviews, the transcribing, and veracity checks, the data was broken down into similar categories (Merriam, 1988). According to Spradley (1979) the analysis of the data refers to the "systematic examination of something to determine its parts among parts, and their relationship to the whole (p. 92). After combing through the categories for recurring patterns, the findings were then further broken down into themes and both similar and contrasting responses were placed together. My overall interpretation is rooted in relevant secondary sources, a broad theoretical framework from various disciplines primarily in sociology, anthropology, political science, and education, and from some of my own personal and professional experiences.

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Given the different social locations that existed between myself and each individual student based on social factors such as "race," ethnicity, culture, age, gender, class, religion, and/or experiences, I do not claim to be in a position of authority regarding their lived experiences and perspectives after having employed specific research methodologies to obtain data and insights. As a result, I have chosen to present the text such that each students' response is articulated as closely as possible in his/her own language and voice.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the methodology employed in this study did not model a particular qualitative tradition but was centred around qualitative methodological principles. A total of three data collection methods were employed to enhance the validity of the findings. A survey questionnaire was completed by 41 students, a total of 10 students (5 white and 5 non-white) were selected to participate in the interviewing process, and lastly formal and informal observations were made within the research site (Woodendoors Composite high school). The research findings are presented in the students' own voices, and then interpretatively discussed based on relevant secondary sources in various social scientific disciplines, as well as my own professional and personal experiences.

CHAPTER IV

THE CANADIAN IDENTITY: STUDENTS' VIEWS REGARDING "RACE," ETHNICITY AND CULTURE WITHIN CANADA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to initially understand the views of the students on the key concepts of "race," culture, and ethnicity. Data is then presented to clarify the sources of the students' views and beliefs. The chapter continues by exploring a number of thematic issues including the students' understanding of Canada's "history," the "Canadian" identity, and questions of inter-ethnic and intercultural relationships within the "multicultural" Canadian society.

DEFINING "RACE," CULTURE, AND ETHNICITY

Question numbers 21 - 23 of the survey questionnaire asked students to define the concepts of "race," culture, and ethnicity respectively based on their own understanding and perceptions. The responses reflect a range of different understandings and constructions.

i) "Race"

Some of the "white" students defined the concept of "race" in terms of physical characteristics.

> #5: *I see race as different, I don't know how to say it, like different types of people. Like Caucasian, Negro, Oriental, etc.*
>
> #14: *Skin colour, Nationality, physical attributes, like Blacks have bigger lips, nose, feet, etc*
>
> #17: *Race is groups of people. Oriental, Africans, Caucasian.*

#13: *I feel race is your real background. ie) Black, White, Oriental, Indian, etc*

A significant number of the "white" students defined "race" in terms of a particular group of people who share a common background that is embedded with specific beliefs and values.

#1: *One's background, culture, colour, where their family is from.*

#2: *Race is the group of people with whom you most identify because of your beliefs, morals and values. You are born into a race.*

#4: *Race is a group of people with similarities. For example; the Jewish race, the African race, the human race. From where the person belongs or comes from.*

#7: *A race is a segment of population from a certain geography which is similar to one another; like how they look and also their shared beliefs.*

#26: *Race is your heritage and background. It helps develop who you are and what you believe in.*

#28: *A race is a group of people who share common beliefs and values, not necessarily living in the same places.*

#39: *I define it as all the people of the same background. For example, Chinese, Indian, German, etc.*

4 out of a total of 7 "non-white" students' defined "race" in terms of an individual's cultural background.

#34: *Where a person is culturally originally from.*

#37: *I would define race as a group of people that have the same culture.*

#32: *A person's race is who they are, where they are from. It shouldn't divide us.*

One "non-white" student regarded "race" in terms of physical attributes.

#41: *I define race as the race that you are. Such as how people are either black, white, brown, red, yellow etc.*

One "non-white" student regarded "race" in terms of both physical and social attributes.

#38: *From what I think, race is the colour of your skin, your languages, your religion, and your place of birth. What your nationality is.*

However, one "non-white" student regarded "race" as insignificant.

#33: *I don't think much about races. I think we are all the human race. We are all different but somewhat the same. I have seen too much racism to care much about races.*

ii) Culture

Question number 22 asked students to define the concept of culture. The data revealed that both the "white" and the "non-white" students defined culture in relation to a number of characteristics such as traditions, beliefs, background, learned behaviour, and ancestry.

#17: *Culture is a set of belief, way of life, music, clothing, traditions.*

#16: *The beliefs and the background ones inherited or grown fond of. Beliefs and values that someone follows.*

#9: *The background, values and beliefs that one comes from and is raised with.*

#6: *The language and traditions a society of people choose to follow because of ancestral roots.*

#20: *I think culture has more to do with traditional celebrations and religious beliefs of different races.*

#22: *A group of people with common customs, laws, observances etc.. ie Jewish, Georgian, Punk.*

#7: *A culture is a subdivision of race in which they are divided by their way of life and beliefs.*

#31: *A set of traditions, values, and beliefs unique to an individual race.*

#35: *What people do to celebrate their beliefs.*

#32: *Culture is what a person grows up knowing. How their families live their lives.*

#37: *I would define culture as the way of life for individuals of a specific group. Their beliefs, values, those type of things.*

#33: *Culture. I see it as people's values, morals, and beliefs. How they live and dress. It entails everything they do.*

#38: *How you live your life, your beliefs, your background, and where you live.*

#41: *I define culture as being the values, traditions, and beliefs a person has in a specific race.*

iii) Ethnicity

With regards to defining the term ethnicity, the results revealed that it was an ambiguous term for the "white" students to define. 14 out of the 34 "white" students responded by writing *"I don't know"* or *"Not sure."* Some of the students defined it as the "combination" or "mixture" of "race" and culture.

#3: *I think that it is a combination of the influences from your race and cultures.*

#5: *I don't really know what ethnicity is. I sort of see it as a mixture of race and culture. Just the way certain people live.*

#2: *Ethnicity is a common belief system among a race.*

Some regarded it as having to do with identity.

#6: *How a race chooses to define itself.*

#24: *Diversity in belief, values, tradition and culture all put together into your identity.*

Others felt that it was linked to "heritages" and "backgrounds."

#1: *Being a few different cultures. eg. being born in Canada but having grandparents or parents from another country.*

#31: *The background of your ancestors; your specific origins.*

#25: *Where you are originally from, your family.*

#15: *The country and culture your bloodlines trace back to.*

#12: *It's the country you come from. That's basically what I've pieced together.*

#29: *I guess I would say someone's background would be their ethnicity.*

Some students believed that ethnicity had a religious component.

#16: *The religious aspect of someone's life and the origin that they acquire.*

#14: *Different religious beliefs which people have.*

#21: *The daily practice of religion, beliefs, and values that are carried from generation to generation.*

5 out of the 7 "non-white" students did not know the definition of ethnicity as indicated by their responses *"Don't know"* and *"N/A."* For the remaining 2, ethnicity was related to *"a combination of race and culture"* and *"language and cultures found in different areas of the world."*

STUDENTS' SOURCES OF VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS

During the course of interviewing, each student was directly asked, and/or voluntarily discussed the source(s) that have contributed to the development of their present views and perceptions regarding the constructs of "race," culture, and ethnicity. It was found that for a significant number of students, "school" was the primary contributing source. Secondary sources mentioned were "life experiences" and *"family"* respectively, typically in conjunction with *"school"* however.

It was found that the constructs of "race," culture, and ethnicity were not concepts that white students *"really thought about"* unless they "learned about it in school." As Carrie points out

> CARRIE: *Well I don't really think about these things to tell you the truth because I am a Caucasian. But like in school we learn a little bit of stuff about cultures and that's where you start thinking about it. For me, my views come mostly from school because like that's where we learn about other cultures, and about our own Caucasian race. You do take that information and apply it to what you see in life, but like for me, I don't really think about it unless it's presented in class, which is usually in Social Studies.*

Mike shared a similar perspective as Carrie but felt that society was also an important source for his perceptions and views.

> MIKE: *I don't really think about race and stuff like that, it just makes me mad. Like when I go out and stuff, I'll hear people speaking their own language and stuff and it's like don't they know that we speak English here. There's a lot of kids at this school too that don't speak English, and that just bugs me. I would say that I learn a lot from what I see from them...immigrants and stuff. Plus in Social, we do talk about other cultures and stuff and from that I know that when I see an East Indian person in Canada, I know that they behave the same way in Canada as they do in India.*

For Rodney, *"school"* was the primary source for his views, but it is/was a *"waste of time and dollars."*

> RODNEY: *Personally, I don't really care for other cultures and what's happening to them, and I don't care to learn about them. In class we learn about the wars and stuff in other countries but why should we be concerned? It's their problem that their political system is all messed up, let them sort it out for themselves. I think it's a waste of my education and*

> *tax dollars to be focussing on other countries, and learning about other cultures and stuff. I think we need to focus more on us Canadians rather than others.*

For the non-white students, it was found that the constructs of "race," culture, and ethnicity were concepts that they *"always"* thought about given their *"minority"* status. For these non-white students *"school"* was the primary source for their knowledge and understanding about "Canadian" culture and their *"families"* and *"experiences"* were an instrumental source for their knowledge and understanding about themselves. As Phylicia stated

> PHYLICIA: *At school, we've learned a lot about Europe and stuff, and for me, that doesn't really apply to me. So at home, I find myself asking my parents more about their roots to you know, know the history of my parents and stuff.*

For David, the content conveyed to him at school regarding "racial" and cultural diversity was not an accurate representation of his reality. Because he lives as a member of the non-dominant group, he finds that his thirst for answers has intensified given his lack of satisfaction with the content conveyed.

> DAVID: *For me, a lot of my views and the way I think come from just my own everyday experiences as a minority. We do discuss issues around multiculturalism and stuff but like some of the...white...kids in my class always get really angry and stuff. The teachers don't really do a good job of explaining things but maybe that's because they share the same opinions as the white kids but can't say anything. For people like us (non-white), the issues are deep and I can tell that...white...people don't and won't understand. I don't know what it is but like once I'm done school and have some time I would like to get more knowledge into this and learn why white people are thought of as more superior than everyone else. It's weird, but like I'm almost done school and I don't feel like I've learned what I wanted to learn. It's all about white people man.*

For Sapna, Rose, and MR2, the sources of their knowledge and understanding is rooted in what they *"have learned in school,"* but their views and perceptions are based on their *"experiences."* As Sapna explains

> SAPNA: *At school that is where we get most of the knowledge from right, from the teachers and stuff. Like about European history, the pioneers, and like how today we are becoming a multicultural society....But the way I get treated and the way that I've seen other*

> *minorities get treated my views about Canada change. Don't get me wrong, I think that it is a great country and all but we do have a lot of racism and stuff here where...white...people just think that they are better....I think that schools should do a lot more to teach others about other people and how to respect them.*

CANADIAN HISTORY

During the interviews, one major theme emphasized by the students themselves was that of Canadian history which they juxtaposed with their perceptions of Canada's present societal context. More specifically, their views on Canadian history clustered around relations between the First Nations and the Europeans who came as colonizers, and the presence of "Others."

i) Relations Between the First Nations Peoples and the Europeans

All of the students' understanding of history centred primarily around the relations between the First Nations Peoples and the Europeans earlier this century from an exclusively Eurocentric perspective. Although all of the students acknowledged and agreed that the First Nations Peoples were the original inhabitants of Canada, the variation in responses given by some of the white students and the non-white students was notable. Three out of the five white students' account of history concentrated on the belief that the Europeans *"took over"* the First Nations Peoples. Rodney, a white male born and raised in Canada, asserted that the Europeans came to Canada in search of land and were able to "*take over the Indians because they were technologically superior [and] can just develop more faster than other people.*" He believed that the Natives were far *"less developed"* than the Europeans primarily because *"they (Natives) were religious [and] always giving thanks to their gods rather than looking for better ways to do things like the Europeans."* Mike, a white male born and raised in Canada, had similar views in which he regarded the Europeans' culture and standards as "globally appropriate."

> MIKE: *Canada was not known to the world as a country until the civilization of the Europeans made it a country. It took their social status and knowledge to make it a country....[The] Natives could have [made it a country], but the Europeans would not have recognized it.*

Like Rodney and Mike, Carrie, a white female born and raised in Canada, also believed that the presence of Europeans in Canada served to *"civilize"* and *"develop"* the Native peoples and the land. However, for her, Canada's demographical transition from a Native nation to that of a *"ruling Caucasian nation"* along with the annexing of the New World was inevitable.

> CARRIE: *When Canada first started, the English and the French came over and took over. At that time the majority was the Native Americans but because of the force the Caucasians used they became the majority probably because of the government thing because the Natives weren't allowed to vote....I believe that it would have been done eventually anyway. Like people did discover America. If the States would have made a border and Canada was all Native American, I think eventually there would have been a war and somebody would have taken over Canada if it wasn't the English or French. It eventually would have happened.*

In contrast, the remainder of the students' understanding of Canadian history did not centre around the notions of *"civilizing"* or *"developing"*. They believed that the First Nations Peoples were the original peoples of Canada but it was the French and English who *"founded"* and *"settled"* in Canada and *"established"* it. MR2's response is exemplary of the remainder of the students' responses.

> MR2: *Well the way I understand Canada's history and stuff with the Natives is that the French and British basically came here and they set up the government and stuff...I don't really know what the Natives were up to but I know that there were signing of treaties and stuff. I think that was so there was a mutual understanding between the Natives and the government.*

Although the French had first arrived in the 1500s in what is now called Canada, the majority of European immigration occurred during the first half of the twentieth century (Driedger, 1996; Tulchinsky, 1994; Ungerleider, 1996). Both the white and non-white students were uncertain as to when the Europeans first came to Canada, as well as when the majority of Europeans came to Canada. Their responses ranged between the 1400s to the 1800s for both occurrences. One student in particular, Phylicia, a Black Jamaican-Canadian female born and raised in Canada, allotted the Aboriginal Peoples and the Europeans an almost simultaneous time period of existence in the New World. According to Phylicia, everybody in the world originated from one common place and over time migrated to other places around the world. She believed that the First Nations

Peoples were the first to immigrate to Canada and that the Europeans immigrated shortly after thereby essentially making both groups immigrants to Canada.

> PHYLICIA: *... because there's no one set culture in Canada everybody has to be from somewhere...I still think they (First Nations Peoples) had to come from somewhere. Because God created people in the one place and everyone spread from there, and they (First Nations Peoples) eventually came to Canada. To me the Native People and Europeans both just came over to Canada and so they're both immigrants. I think the one group came first, and then Europeans came shortly after that I think.*

Similarly, Rose, a Vietnamese female born and raised in Canada, also considered First Nations Peoples as immigrants to Canada. Her explanation however did not relate to migration patterns as did Phylicia's, but instead was centered solely on the basis of "race", which for her was the primary factor in determining who is and who is not an immigrant in Canada.

> ROSE: *Yes I think everyone in Canada is an immigrant. Because everyone came from somewhere else. Because it's not often you meet someone that's pure Canadian that lived here since the beginning of time. I think the Native people have always lived here [but] I still consider them immigrants because my typical Canadian would be white. I don't really think of Native people as the people that were here first because of how they look. It seems like they immigrated here.*

Carrie, continuously kept espousing that the Native Peoples are no longer the majority group in Canada but that the Caucasians are *"and everyone has to respect them."* Although she said that *"taking over"* the Natives in their own homeland was morally wrong, for her, the fact remained that the whites are the ruling group today. Regardless of what may have occurred in the past, for her *"the past is the past"* and the rights the First Nations Peoples are demanding today are irrelevant in a nation predominately consisting of *"Caucasians."*

> CARRIE: *We came over, and in my opinion took over and pushed the Natives aside. And now you look at in the papers and stuff today, the Natives do want their land back and they want to be able to have their religious ceremonies or whatever they do. Personally in my opinion, I think they should get over it. I don't believe that I should have to pay for my ancestors mistakes. My ancestors were people and they did make mistakes but as I said before I believe that it would have been done eventually anyway.....I understand that it wasn't right at the time but I*

> *don't think the Natives should be able to have what land they want now. I know they were in B.C. fighting for that river I don't remember where, but it was somewhere in Banff or something. I don't see what the problem is.*
>
> *I don't understand why they need to be separated now. I don't understand why they can't just co-exist with us [as] a lot of our tax dollars do go out there.... I think we should be able to work together. I understand that they have different values and different religious things and appreciations. But I don't see why they can't have that with us too. But it's hard for them because everybody else has their own home. If you look at some Muslims*[10] *for example, they wanted to continue their religion here. Well here you have the argument that if you don't want to live by our rules go home and live there but you can't really say that to [the] Natives because they don't really have a home anymore.*

Carrie's last statement in which she declared the First Nations Peoples' as globally homeless, was also shared by Rodney and Mike. The remainder of the students did not regard the Natives as "homeless" in Canada but rather perceived them as an invisible peoples in their own homeland. For many of these latter students, expressing their views and understanding of First Nations Peoples' present social realities in direct relation to past historical occurrences was a self-discovery they had made for the first time during the interview process as the opportunity had not previously presented itself.

> SAPNA: *I haven't really thought about this actually. But from what I know it wasn't right what happened to the Natives. You know how their land and stuff was taken by the Europeans. I know that they had their own way of life and everything but now it's like they can't live like they want to. Well they can, but I know the government makes it difficult for them at times. I personally don't think the government should stop them from doing what they want to do. They were here first, you know what I mean? I don't know, that's how I see it. I know the two views are different but I think the Native people of this country should be able to live their lives the way they want to live it.*

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[10] Upon clarification with Carrie, I had asked her to elaborate on the Muslims. Although she stated *"Muslims,"* she was actually referring to the Sikhs in Canada and the wearing of the turbans. I did clarify with Carrie that she was referring to the Sikhs and not Muslims.

Sapna then went on to discuss how the lack of presence of First Nations Peoples in her daily life blinds her from understanding that it is in fact originally a First Nations country and not originally a white country.

> SAPNA: *Come to think of it, I don't even see a lot of Native people actually, its like mostly all white people around. I guess maybe because I don't see them (First Nations Peoples) you forget in the day to day things that you do, that it was their land and stuff first. You just get so use to living in this white society that you just think that that's what it is, a white country and you live in that and you forget that it was the Natives' country first....I also want to say that you've got me thinking about how all of this came about where like the Natives aren't even respected or honoured in their own homeland, you know what I mean? It's not right. I'm not sure to tell you the truth how this came about, but I would like to know.*

Although Rodney recognized that the First Nations Peoples were in Canada prior to European settlement, he did not regard the First Nations Peoples' history prior to European contact and settlement as a part of Canada's history given that he believed that *"Canadian history began in 1867."*

> RODNEY: *I don't really see what they did before we [Europeans] came has to do with us or what we are today. They didn't make the government and stuff in our country, the Europeans did....I don't see whatever happened before 1867 has to do with what we are now. Like what the Natives did before us has nothing to do with the history of this country. Canada doesn't really have a history, well not like England's, you know where they've had a lot happen like all the civil wars and stuff like that. We never had any of that. I know that we had the wars with the Indians, but I'm not exactly sure what happened in that. From what I understand, we were made by the signing of a piece of paper. What's that! We have somewhat of a history now because of what we've done in WW1 & WW2 and the UN and stuff like that but besides that we don't really.*

ii) The Presence of "Other(s)" in Canada's History

Although the students' understanding of history centred primarily around relations between the First Nations Peoples and the Europeans, the presence of non-whites in Canada's history also emerged at different locations in each interview with each individual student. All of the students were aware of the existence of a "minimum" number of Chinese and Japanese only, earlier this century. The presence of other noteworthy non-white groups such as the "Blacks" who were first "imported" to Canada in the early 1600s from Africa by the French and forced into slavery (Alexander and Glaze, 1996; Bolaria and Li, 1988) were not mentioned or recognized. The Sikhs, who were the first South Asian[11] to enter Canada in the late nineteenth century (Henry, et all, 1995; Raj, 1980; Singh, 1994) were also not mentioned nor were the students aware of their presence in Canada since the late 1800s.

MR2, a Chinese male born in Hong Kong and raised in Canada since the age of 5, discussed his understanding of Chinese immigration to Canada in "1858, when gold was discovered in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia" and during "1881 and 1885, when the Canadian Pacific Railway was constructed" (Bolaria, and Li, 1988, p. 102). His knowledge regarding Chinese immigration was based on what he learnt in Social Studies.

> MR2: *We were told how like the Chinese came here because there was some gold in a mountain and how they worked on the rail road. But it wasn't discussed in depth or anything like say Germany, the wars and Europe you know stuff like that. They...the teachers and textbooks...just basically tell us that the Chinese came over and worked that's it. Basically you know that they were here to work. They always do that. Teachers just skim over stuff really fast especially like with other cultures and stuff. They don't go into details about things. They always tell you stuff like, this happened, or that happened but they never tell you "why" so that you can properly understand. And even like the textbooks, they just say things but don't really explain why and don't go into things.*

Based on MR2's understanding of Chinese immigration to Canada, he felt that the Chinese were *"stupid"* for coming to Canada in search of a better economic life as he perceived their existing lives in China to be better off.

> MR2: *The Chinese were stupid for coming here in the first place. When they found that gold in the mountain they never got rich from it. They just came here and did labour on the rail road. Life was so easy for them (Chinese) there [in China]. They had money and everything they wanted.*

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[11] The term South Asian as used in this context refers to "people who were born in the Indian subcontinent, and include people from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhuttan, and Bangladesh. It also includes people with roots in South Asia who have immigrated from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, the Caribbean nations and other countries" (Henry, Tator, Mattis, Rees, 1995, p.70-71)

> *Because when you come to a new place you have to start over and they had everything there so I don't understand why they would want to come here and give everything up. And they had to pay to come here. I don't understand why they would want to do that. The Europeans were the richer nations at the time and I don't understand why they...the Chinese...would give them more money. They just thought they'd come here and get more rich or whatever. I don't understand why they would believe the...Europeans...and come over here. I'm not blaming them (Chinese) but like in a way it is their own fault because like China is such a rich nation, it's always been and I don't get why they would want to come here just to work and stuff.*

Rose's understanding of "Others" in "Canadian" history was premised on the notion that non-whites were immigrants to Canada whereas the whites were not. She believed that because *"white people have a deeper history in Canada"* they are naturally bestowed certain rights and privileges in society. Furthermore, the following statement reflects a measure of personal internalization of an "inferior" status in relationship to the whites in Canadian society.

> ROSE: *Sometimes I don't feel I'm as good as white people because they were the ones that were here first right and we immigrated here. I don't feel like I'm on an equal level as them. I guess it's because of their roots and history in Canada [and] because of them being here longer than my family and people have. And you know they do have more power in society as they have the right to say this or that without being put down. They have the higher level of jobs and positions and everything like that.*

In discussing the existence of a predominant white population with the students, most attributed this population shift to European settlement. After students had shared their responses, I had the asked them if they were aware that the Canadian government had in fact devised laws to keep non-white people out. None of the students were aware of this. They indicated that this issue had not been covered in their school curriculum. Rodney, explained Canada's existence of a predominant white population in direct relation to the early European settlements which *"civilized"* and *"developed"* Canada, along with the *"many"* Europeans who *"came here"* prior to the world wars. In comparing the presence of whites and non-whites in Canada earlier this century, Rodney questioned whether non-whites were in fact prohibited from entering Canada or chose not to come despite being aware that *"coloured people were seen as lower by Canadians (white) back in history."*

> RODNEY: *...I'm not sure why there are so many white people in Canada. Depends where you go actually. I find there's more white people for sure but I guess it's because we were here first. And you know so many Europeans came here before the world wars as well. I don't know if the Chinese people and East Indians and stuff weren't allowed to come here or didn't want to come here. I'm not sure if they didn't want to or weren't allowed.*

Rodney's tone immediately became abrupt as his voice escalated.

> RODNEY: *I'm not one to live in the past. I like to look forward to the future. I don't really give a crap just because Christopher Columbus or whoever else came here. Like look at our dollar and how low it is. I wanna be able to raise that, I don't want to look at the past.*

Carrie too was aware of the majority group's preexisting "racist" attitudes and "unequal treatment" of non-whites from *"movies mostly, and in Social and English."* However, Carrie questioned the verity of the negative presentation of whites both historically and presently given the self-perceived social stigma it attached to her as a white person. She argued that there were *"jerks"* other than whites and referred to the film "The Power of One" as an example to illustrate the juxtaposition between "good" and "bad" whites.

> CARRIE: *Sometimes I think about being white in Canada. When you look back at history, like during the civil rights and stuff, and you look at all these Caucasians, you get the impression that they were jerks, and I know sometimes they were. I know I've thought about it but sometimes you get frustrated with the white people [of the past] because of the symbols that it gives me as a white person today, like being prejudice. For me when I hear of somebody being prejudice or whatever its usually associated with Caucasians. There was probably Black jerks too, but you always hear of the whites, and I don't know how true all of that is about them (whites). Like I know after watching the Power of One, I was totally disgusted with what whites could do but at the same time you see that whites can be good too....I haven't had anybody really accuse me of being racist or anything like that because I'm white, or for what my ancestors did but I guess it's my own personal feeling.*

THE "CANADIAN" IDENTITY

During the course of the interviews, the students consistently referred to the term *"Canadian"* to denote the "identity" of people who are members of Canadian society. From their responses to the question, however, it was clear that the Canadian identity is more complex and problematic than simply a descriptor for people who are citizens or permanent residents of this country.

i) The Physical/"Racial" Construct

8 (4 white and 4 non-white) out of the 10 students regarded the term Canadian to be synonymous with white. Both the white and non-white students regarded and/or were aware of society's views of only perceiving whites as Canadians first and foremost.

MR2, had a preconceived idea of what the Canadian looked like prior to immigrating to Canada. He described a Canadian as someone who has *"blond hair or brown hair, [is] white-skinned, blue-eyed, and tall."* When I asked him how he arrived at this definition he replied by saying that it was *"from watching television when I was in Hong Kong."* This is a notable response as it reveals what type of Canadian image is globally presented via the mass media. Rose, a Vietnamese Canadian, also associated white with being Canadian even though she herself, a non-white, was born in Canada. She defined what a *"typical Canadian"* is for her and how she came to that conclusion.

> ROSE: *...just white skin and blond hair or brown hair, that type because ever since I was younger, I usually only saw white people, and not many Oriental people, and I figured [it was because] they were here first.... [Also] how the media shows it on t.v., it's basically white. They have had Oriental people and other colours of skin, but mostly its white, and that's just how it seems like the world thinks [at least] that's what people here think.*

Generating a concrete response from the white students (except Peter) with regards to the Canadian physical construct proved to be more laborious in comparison to the non-white students. Therefore, in order to accurately comprehend their responses I directly asked each white student three closed-ended questions. First, I asked "tell me who you would consider to be Canadian if you were at a restaurant and saw a group of people of various "races" at a table having dinner together?" The students responded by saying *"the white one(s)."* In my second question I asked the students "when you hear 1 out of 10 Canadians prefers X instead of Y, who are these Canadians according to you?" The students responded by saying *"white people."* Based on their responses to the first two questions, I then directly asked the students "do you equate a white person with a Canadian?" to clarify my interpretation. They all said *"yes."*

Although Phylicia does not choose to attach any specific "race" with the term Canadian, she is nevertheless aware that the majority of people in society continue to equate whites with "Canadian" and all non-whites are deemed immigrants from elsewhere.

> PHYLICIA: *To me, everyone can be a Canadian. Canadian is multicultural. It's not one specific culture or race, it's everyone that lives here. It's a mixture, it's colourful, it's very nice. I think it's nice, everybody living together. But most people think of Canadian as white people from Europe and then all the other different races from somewhere else. If you're a different race, you're still not Canadian. That could be because they don't know about other races. If they see someone of a different colour they'll think they're from Africa, or China, they don't think that all these people could actually be Canadian. I think it's narrow minded [because] the reality is it's a mixture of everyone. Most people think this way because I think probably in most peoples' minds they think that the whites are the ones that came first to Canada, and/or they've just always been here in Canada from day one. So therefore they're viewed as Canadian. It doesn't necessarily mean that white people are from Canada or anything like that because it's just skin colour. They could be from Greece or something like that and could actually be Greek. But most people don't see it that way, they just see the colour of the skin.*

Similarly, Rodney supported Phylicia's statement. He too believed that it is easier for some people to be regarded as Canadian and not others. He believed that the likelihood of a white person being a Canadian is higher than a non-white person. He also believed that a white person born and/or raised in Canada will unquestionably be deemed a Canadian, whereas a non-white person born and/or raised in Canada will not.

> RODNEY: *It's easier for people to believe that a white person is a Canadian and not the non-white person because most Canadians you think are white. Like if someone saw a white person and they live in Canada they probably are Canadian but someone who's like Asian they'll think that they immigrated here and that they aren't Canadian. But if they're born here and raised here even if they weren't born here but still raised here, I can see people [in society] saying their something else. Ya well, we're always gonna have that "racial" thing.*

In sum, all of the students regarded the "Canadian" identity as synonymous with "white" members of Canada's society either on the basis of their understanding of history and/or based on their experiences in society.

ii) Perspectives of "Non-White" Canadians

Rose's parents were born and raised in Vietnam but she herself was born and raised in Canada. She defined herself as Vietnamese mainly because she said *"I do not look like the typical Canadian...white skin and blond hair."* She did not reject or deny her Vietnamese ancestral roots because as she stated *"that's what my parents are and that's a part of me too."* Rose also considered herself a Canadian primarily because she was born and raised in Canada. However, internalizing this definition was difficult for Rose as she is frequently asked *"When did you get here?" and /or "Where are you from?"* The routine emergence of this question from white people was problematic for Rose as it made her feel that she did not *"belong"* in Canada.

> ROSE: *White people will always look at me and say oh where are you from, or like when did you come to Canada, and I've never even been to Vietnam....I get that a lot (laugh). No one says were you born here, instead it's like when did you come here? What makes you think I wasn't born here? No one really asks me where I'm from because they just think because I'm Asian I must be Chinese. I do clarify things with people if I know them, but if it's a complete stranger then I don't. But when they ask me if I'm Chinese, I tell them straight out no I'm Vietnamese.*

Faith, a white female born and raised in Canada, shared her perception regarding the Others' notion of identity. She believed that a Chinese person, born and raised in Canada, with parents who were born and raised in China, would consider themselves Chinese and not Canadian. Her analysis emerged in relation to her own ethnocultural background. She defined herself along with the majority of white Canadians as *"Heinz 57."* This term is used to refer to individuals living in Canada of various European descents who have amalgamated as a direct result of intermarriages between various European ethnic groups over the generations. Faith said *"it's just easier for white Canadians to just say Canadian rather than say I'm a bit of this, and this, and this, and that."* She believed that because Chinese people do not intermarry, as their marriage partners are chosen for them, both parents will be Chinese. Because the child does not have any other ethnicities within his/her blood other than Chinese, they will therefore say they are Chinese. She felt that the degree to which parents believe in their culture and roots will determine how their children will identify themselves.

> FAITH: *...For example, if I'm not being closed-minded, in the Chinese culture the fathers pick the husbands for the daughters, or that's how it is in the books, I don't know if I'm being lost with that you know what I mean. So a Chinese marries a Chinese so they come from China and then their kid is born here and they (kid) say ya I'm Chinese. That's how I think of it anyway. I don't think a Chinese person would say I'm Canadian, they'd say I'm Chinese even if they're born here because both of their parents are Chinese and I know they (Chinese) strongly believe in where they come from.*

Phylicia who was born and raised in Canada, defined herself as a Jamaican Canadian from the Caribbean Islands. She identified herself with her Caribbean roots as her mother is from Trinidad, and her father is from Jamaica as she did not want to be *"ignorant"* of her ancestors. Like Rose, Phylicia too was identified primarily on the basis of her "racial" construct. However, for Phylicia, people assume that because she is Black, she must be from Africa.

> PHYLICIA: *I know that when people, the ones that don't know me, when they look at me they see that my skin colour is black. So when people see that what comes to mind is where is she from? When most people think of Black they associate Black people with Africa. Most of the time people think I'm from Africa but I tell them that I was born here. It's too bad that people don't get that a person could be Black and be from Canada but their ancestors could be from Africa or Jamaica....I find this with white people mostly. It's like because of what your race is, they think that you must be from that particular country. I find with people that aren't white though, they understand more because of similar experiences I guess or something. I know that for me, I'm more open and not narrow in my thinking just because of my own diverse background.*

Rodney explained the simplicity in identifying people on the basis of their "racial" construction and/or accent. However, he shared an example of an incident which countered his theory.

> RODNEY: *It's easier to pick out Chinese people, because of the way they look, the colour of their skin, their facial features. You know where a person comes from because of how they look; they look a certain way, like their facial features....But I got a Chinese guy come up to me this one time,*

> *I thought he was Chinese. He came up to me and he had an American Texas accent, like okay, that was a shock but I just thought he was a regular Chinese person but he was a Texan. I don't know, I find it easier to pick out other people because of their facial structures, and accents and how they talk but you can't do that. I don't know.*

iii) The "Canadian" ("White") Identity

While distributing the survey questionnaires, I had asked the students to review the questions and ask for clarification if necessary. The question that perplexed the majority of white students was question number five which asked "how do you define your ethnocultural background?" One student asked if I was looking for what their grandparents were. Another asked if they should write down all of their heritages. Another asked if they should write down where their ancestors were from. Although various questions were raised, the students' written responses revealed they understood what the question ultimately posed. Carrie felt that students had a difficult time understanding the question because *"it isn't something that we're asked really. I don't see it as something we Caucasian people really think about, or have to think about really."*

A total of 41 survey questionnaires were distributed of which 34 students were white. 27 white students defined themselves solely as Canadian as both they and their parents were born and raised in Canada. 3 white students defined themselves solely as Canadian as they and 1 parent were born in Canada and the other parent was born in Europe. 2 white students defined themselves as hyphenated Canadians as both they and their parents were born and raised in Canada. 2 white students had no hyphenated definition as they defined themselves according to where they and their parents were born.

As mentioned earlier, Faith had explained how the majority of white Canadians define themselves as simply "Canadian" or a "Heinz 57" given their amalgamated European compositions which resulted as people of various European descents in Canada intermarried. According to Faith, white Canadians use the term Canadian in place of their various European backgrounds when asked what their identity is.

> FAITH: *I consider myself Canadian and that's what I tell people I am. But because you asked me where my family comes from I would say that I'm French mostly, but I have some British, German, and Russian in me. But I don't see what those have to do with what I am you know. Like*

> *I've never been to any of those countries, they're just my roots. I'm Canadian, my family's been here for a long time...[since] my grandparents immigrated here in 1940 something....It's just easier to say Canadian instead of I'm a bit of this and that, and this. If you look at the majority of us people in Canada, we're all mostly white right. All of us have a bunch of different heritages in us and that's what makes us Canadian; that's our identity.*

However, not all "whites" in Canada define themselves as Canadians, or are an amalgamation of various European heritages as exemplified by Peter and student #39. Student #39 in the survey, defined herself as Croatian, as both she and her parents, were born in Croatia, and immigrated to Canada in 1989. She also shared the importance of retaining her cultural identity and values.

> #39: *Although I am a Canadian now, I still consider myself to be 100% Croatian because both of my parents and me were born there....I feel that it is a very important aspect of my life. I never want to forget where I came from and what my values are. I also would not want my children to grow up without being part of the Croatian culture.*

Peter, defined himself as Ruthenian, as both he and his parents, were born in Yugoslavia and immigrated to Canada when he was eleven years old. He also discussed the importance of maintaining his Ruthenian identity and values despite living in Canada.

> PETER: *I define myself as Ruthenian. Its who I am, that's how I am, that's what makes me, me. If others choose to do what they want, they can I'm not against it. That's what makes me different and determines who I am. There's pride in being different. Basically you've got something unique, unique language, unique culture. If you become too conformist, nothing separates you apart basically. You're just like everyone else. You become part of a big group and because everyone's the same you get lost. If everyone is the same then that's not good. I see being different as a positive in Canada, that's just my belief. But like it also depends on your friends too, if they wanna accept you for what you are that's all that matters, like if you're different or not it shouldn't matter to them. No one has ever bugged me about my culture or anything so, you know, it's okay to be different (Ruthenian).*

Two of the white students, #25 and #31, defined themselves as hyphenated Canadians even if though they and their parents were born and raised in Canada. Each shared the importance of maintaining both of their bicultural identities. In addition to speaking

English, Student #25 speaks Ukrainian and Yugoslavian, which he learned at *"home, school, and [from] friends"* but feels he is loosing his ability to speak when he does not *"practice."* Both languages continue to be spoken in the home. Student #25 continues to maintain his connection to his European roots.

> #25: *I think of myself as a Ukrainian-Canadian and not just Canadian. I cherish what my grandparents did for me in bringing my family here. I am proud of my roots and proud of my fellow family members still in Europe. Because of this, I understand almost all of their everyday life which helps me to understand my own roots.*

Student #31 defined herself as a German-Canadian. In addition to speaking English, she speaks *"a bit of German"* which she learned while spending a year in Germany. She is loosing her ability to speak German as *"no one really speaks or knows the language here [and] we don't speak it at home or anything."*

> #31: *My Germanness is somewhat important to me. It makes me interested in classes such as social studies especially in reference to the Holocaust and Hitler and the wars my grandfather and great-grandfather fought in. It is and it isn't [important for me to maintain my German values]. Keeping my German values allows me to become closer to family, but my own values are much more important to me because I am not living in Germany, but in Canada.*

Cultural retention among the 29 white students that defined themselves solely as Canadian was low. 8 considered their backgrounds a somewhat important aspect of their life, whereas 21 did not consider it important at all. 21 out of the 29 students had a moderate understanding of their roots which were transmitted primarily by grandparents and school followed by books, and media. 24 out of the 29 did not feel that it was important to maintain elements of their background

Mike did not believe that his English, Russian and Ukrainian background were important but rather his Canadian identity was.

> MIKE: I *feel that I am 100% Canadian rather than English, Ukrainian, Russian, etc. These backgrounds don't really matter to me at all. I'm Canadian. Where you're born and raised is who you are, not where your parents, or grandparents come from. Those are THEIR roots not mine!*

Rodney too defined himself as a Canadian.

> RODNEY: *Whenever people ask me what my background is I just say Canadian because that's where I'm born so that's where I'm from, that's my background. I know my dad, he's from England, Europe whatever. But my mom, she's from Canada; all of my grandparents and all them are from Canada. It's just where I was raised. I don't know anything about England or Europe so. I don't know anything about that so I don't consider it my background, I don't consider myself English at all. I was never raised there, I don't know anything about it, I've never been there. I don't know what they do during the day or stuff like that, I don't know how people act or do things over there so I don't know anything about that, that's not part of me. I'm proud to be Canadian.*

PERCEPTION OF SOCIETY

If whites in Canada - who are not a monolithic homogeneous group but rather are composed of various ethnic groups who are clustered under the category of white on the basis of skin colour - are regarded as "Canadians," and non-whites who themselves are heterogeneous both between and within groups, but often perceived to be immigrants first even if they were Canadian born, what implications does this have in a multi-"racial" and multi-cultural society? This section explores the students' perceptions of Canadian society.

i) Social Dynamics Between Whites and Non-Whites in Canada Today

In the previous segment, it was found that students were not aware of Canada's historical racist structures that actively prevented non-whites from entering Canada. Although some of the students were aware of the unequal treatment received by non-whites from whites historically, there were some students who felt that Canadian "race" relations had improved on some level in comparison to earlier this century. They attributed this transformation in Canada to the Civil Rights movement in the United States. As Faith states:

> FAITH: *Before in time, a white person would never be caught dead walking with a Black person. Now look at it. My sister's best friend is Black and I hang out with Muslims.*

Recognizing the increasing interaction among different "races" is symptomatic of some kind of positive change for Faith that things have improved in comparison to the past.

However, she continued to relate her perception about current Canadian society in relation to a short story called "Happy Event" by Nadine Gordimer, which we examined in depth during their English 30 class. The story examined the unequal treatment of Blacks and whites in South Africa during the time period when the Apartheid laws were formally instituted in 1948-1993. More specifically, the story focussed on the life experiences of two women; Lena, a Black servant/slave woman, and Ella her rich white master. Faith spoke about the current Canadian social reality in relationship to the societal and historical context of "Happy Event."

> FAITH: *Even though there isn't such a thing as apartheid laws there could be still restrictions and stuff going on today. The white person's allowed to do this in Happy Event but the African person wasn't allowed. You know I still think there isn't a law that says that today but it still goes on. Like I'm white I'm allowed to do this but you're not allowed to do that. It's a law but it's not a law, do you know what I mean? It's not written in stone but it's still there. I don't know what it is. It's like people still see it as being that's the way it was that's the way it still is.*

Faith then went on to discuss how "w*hite people see the unequal treatment between them and the other races happen but do not really know to what extent, or how frequent, and to what degree."*

However, for the non-white students, they were well aware of the "extent," "frequency," and "degree" of unequal treatment between whites and non-whites. David, an East Indian male born in Britain and raised in Canada since the age of nine, finds the concepts of "race" and culture are something he *"always"* thinks about given his lived(ing) experiences in a predominant white society.

> DAVID: *Because I have seen in society how "coloured" people are treated differently and how people poke fun at others who are "different." This gets me thinking in that how a white person has it easier than the person who is not white. Also "coloured" people don't have as much opportunity as a white person, they don't get treated fairly. White people have it easier globally....Instead of assessing a "coloured" person on the basis of their skills and knowledge, they are already negatively pre-judged because of their skin colour.*

Carrie said that she was aware of the exclusion of *"non-Caucasians"* in society. She illustrated her point by using the example of jobs in which she stated *"...I would be* *considered the norm for getting jobs. I wouldn't have a problem at all because I'm Caucasian."*

Rose, MR2, and Sapna, conveyed similar perspectives as David, regarding the disparity in treatment between white and non-white individuals in Canadian society. MR2, shared an example of an incident that was relayed to him by a fellow classmate.

> MR2: *See I don't think that white people are accepting that's what I find. Like in my class the other day this white guy was talking about how he beat up a Black person because he was doing something. I think he (Black person) accidentally bumped into this guy at a bar. Then a whole bunch of white guys beat him up and the white guy was bragging about it. I don't think he would have done that if it was a white person. I don't know, I guess some people think their culture is better than others.*

Phylicia shared similar views as David, MR2, Rose, and Sapna but felt that relations in society are beginning to alter somewhat at all existing levels compared to earlier this century. She believed that because of Canada's diverse composition, all whites and non-whites potentially have the right to equally access opportunities irrespective of their "race."

> PHYLICIA: *Now I think all races do have better equal chances in Canada. In the past it wasn't definitely but I think now society, the government, and people up higher, they probably view everyone as having equal worth and potential in certain places in Canada, at least they should now.*

Although Sapna felt that whites continue to hold all the "power" and "privileges" in society, she stated that she has observed more "*Orientals and Browns moving up.*" She stated

> *SAPNA: Before all the whites only held down the top jobs, now there are more Orientals and Browns. This I have seen happen the past few years, and I believe that there will be more in these good positions. I know that we have to prove ourselves twice as much as a white person because they think that we are dumb; it's like they don't trust or believe that we have a brain. But there are more minority people in these good top jobs who I'm sure are doing very well.*

However, this socioeconomic status has its downfall as it can be regarded by some society members with suspicion as described by MR2. The following is one of many examples MR2 shared regarding being interrogated by the police.

> MR2: *After school I drove to pick up my friend from X High School and the police officer came out and asked me a whole bunch of questions while I was parked outside in front of the school. He saw me and then asked me "Is your car stolen?" Because the Oriental people are usually looked at as drug dealers and stuff and he thought I was probably because I have this car and wondering where I got the money for it. That's how some people feel about Oriental people, they're drug dealers and that's how they buy stuff like that. He also made me get out of the car and he looked in the car and stuff for a long time. I was really pissed but I couldn't do anything because he's a cop right. I don't think that's right what he did.*

This type of experience is not uncommon to MR2, or his friends. He is also verbally harassed by people he does not know for driving a new sports car. They call him the *"C-word - Chink."* To him, the use of the "C-word" is unacceptable but he does not want to *"beat them up or anything"* but feels it stems from *"jealousy."*

> MR2: *People view me, because I'm Oriental that my parents have money; they think they do stuff illegally. You know how in China town and stuff like that they think you got this because your parents are rich because your Oriental...They think that you're not capable of making a decent living. They think you got it illegally because all you see at China town are sports cars. Basically because Oriental people spend money like wherever and people think because you have money you got it illegally. They don't think that we are capable of making a decent living I guess.*

Sapna commented on the negative stigma attached to non-whites in society particularly when the media covers a story. She relayed that an entire non-white ethnic group can be looked down upon due to the results of one individual. She gave an example of a Muslim man who had worked at the LRT and was caught for stealing money from there. She went on to compare the public's reaction to white and non-white individuals who *"do something bad."*

> SAPNA: *After this story leaked into the newspapers and everything, it was a Muslim guy. Then I heard more people say that it was Brown people, so they were stereotyping and labelling all Brown people. That just makes the races look lower when they do that. You don't see the white race look lower when someone white does something bad. To me I don't*

> *understand that. Maybe because in the previous years we, all the ethnic groups like the Orientals, Browns, Negroes, were all looked down. Even today when an ethnic group or a Brown person does something, they're looked down at faster than white people. Maybe because there's a large majority of them that's why they are not looked down at today. But it's easier to look down at ethnic groups than it is to look down at a white person I think because of this.*

Rodney's perception of society centered around his visual observations in which he felt there was a significant increase of non-whites.

> RODNEY: *Canada has changed so much. If you look before, like 20 years ago at the percentage of British people and Chinese people or whatever, it was like the Chinese people were way lower than what they are today. So we are a lot different country and I find Canada isn't like it use to be.*
>
> TKC: *How did it use to be?*
>
> RODNEY: *British.*

He went on to discuss in an abrupt and agitated tone, that he could not understand why immigrants want to come to Canada.

> RODNEY: *I don't know why so many people want to come to Canada but they just come here for you know to work and get away from their country I don't know. Maybe they like our government or economy better I don't know. They're here to just come here and live, they're here for themselves that's what I think. When they come here, they hold on to their traditions and culture. I think they should just be Canadian or go back!*

Some of the non-white students discussed their constant awareness of an existing norm. Although they could not articulate this norm, they were aware that they were not it. Sapna struggled with exactly defining it but her attempt in trying to explain it nevertheless exhibits her awareness of it's existence.

> SAPNA: *Honestly, I don't know how to explain this to you. You know if you're a little bit different or something, you'd be considered a loser. I don't know how to seriously say this to you but I know there is this norm that exists out there but I don't know how to explain it to you. I honestly can not come up with a good example or some way to describe what I'm thinking. But it's kind of like you know how you live in this country, if you don't follow or do things as they do, like say you speak with*

> *an accent, or look different or something, you don't fit in. Even if you do fit in, you still don't fit in. It's really hard to explain this thing.*

Rose defined this norm's existence in direct relation to the white majority.

> ROSE: *There is this sense of "racial" views that's out there. I'm not sure how to explain it, it's kind of hard to. No one says anything, but when the whites look at you it's like you're different, like you don't belong here or something like that. It's not only towards Orientals but like I've seen it with Blacks and other races. I don't feel that there is equality at times. I don't know how to explain where this is coming from, I just picked it up along the way...from just what I know and have experienced. It's like you're different than the whites are, you're not like them and they let you know it. They're the ones that aren't really talked about like "oh she's white" like it's a bad thing. They're considered normal. Even in commercials the white person is the typical person human being. Even though they've started showing different races now it's still all mostly white if you notice.*

MR2 discussed how this norm could be internalized on a "racial" level among Non-whites.

> MR2: *...Like a Black girl playing with a white Barbie doll would want her skin to be white. You think of white as being better. She'd be like "I want my skin to be white instead of Black" because you know how they're (Blacks) made fun of and everything. Some people would want to identify with their Blackness. Some wouldn't, it depends on the person and their views and mind.*

Although Rodney was not constantly reminded of an existing norm, he knew that he was a part of the norm.

> RODNEY: *...I'm pretty sure I'm a part of the norm because I don't think that people look at me and think you know, where the hell are you from and stuff like that. I'm pretty sure they know that I'm normal.*

ii) The Existence of Racism In Canadian Society

All of the students believed that racism exists in Canadian society today. The white students' and the non-white students' experiences with racism differed. All 5 non-white students conveyed numerous personal experiences with overt and covert/subtle racism as well as particular incidences of racism they had witnessed. In contrast, 4 out of the 5 white students had never experienced racism as exemplified by what Rodney said: *"People don't bother me and say oh you're a white-Canadian living in Canada."* But all the white students had witnessed instances of racism, and 3 admitted to being covertly racist.

Phylicia explained her understanding of the present patterns associated with racism in Canada based on her experiences and observations.

> PHYLICIA: *There are people who will think it and say it among their friends and won't do anything about it. But then there are people who will tell that person, make racist comments to a person or group. I've heard people being criticized and making fun of a certain race. Like this one time I was at the mall and there were these guys...they were white-skinned...in their 20s making fun of Jews, Orientals, and stuff and saying all sorts of stuff within their little group. And then this other time, there was a bunch of white people, guys and girls, and they were making all these really rude comments and noises and stuff at the food fair area to this East Indian family.*

Most of the students discussed how overt racism typically consists of *"a group of people picking on one person, rather than a group of people."* According to Phylicia

> *PHYLICIA: Its because it's more easier that way because they want to be more than the person they're picking on....By more than I mean it makes them feel better than the person their picking on. They feel a sense of superiority you could say. When people in a group are being racist they feel more powerful together. It's like you're all thinking the same thing and none of you feel that it's wrong. Plus like the person that's having the racist comments made to them is powerless because it's like say however many versus one....Seems like it's easier to get away with in a group than if it was a one on one type thing.*

David shared how he felt when experiencing racism from one person in comparison to a group of people.

> *DAVID: A lot of times you can just sense that...white...people think that you're lower than them even if they don't say something to your face but you can pick up on other things like their body language, but especially their facial expressions. But when they do say something it makes you feel like, I don't know how to explain it.... It's different when say one person says something to you because then like you know you can stick up for yourself. But like say it's a group of people who are being racist it's like you just have to take it or else you'll make things worse for yourself even though you feel pissed off at them and just want to ignore them. I know like for me, whenever people make comments, it really got to me and I would dwell on it for days after... It makes you self-conscious with them and ya it does hurt...*

MR2 gave an example of a racist incident which initially began as a group of people being racist to one person but then eventually escalated into a group versus group dynamic.

> MR2: *Some people were at this club and these white guys were commenting on Chinese and Oriental people; you know saying some ignorant things and stuff. Well anyways, the Oriental guy, he's a friend of mine, heard what these guys were saying but didn't say anything to them or like do anything to them, he let it go basically. Then like later one of the white guys bumped into him and the guy was being a jerk about it. So my friend got upset and called some guys, 5 or 6. When they came, 30 - 40 guys showed up because like they all called other people. The white guys then wanted to talk about it outside of the club. The white guys said they were talking about an Oriental guy, not him. But my friend didn't like that comments were made about Oriental people, and he didn't like what they said.... Our intention wasn't to fight them or anything but we had to show these guys that it's not acceptable and we are aware. And these guys weren't even saying anything because there was just too many of us there. They wouldn't have tried anything... My friend was just trying to have our culture respected which someone has to do, that's how all that started.*

Incidences of racism only continue to widen the gap for peaceful relations between dominant members of society and the subordinated as MR2 revealed that his friend *"hates white people because he thinks their just so rude and racist towards other people."*

> *MR2: I wouldn't say my friend's racist or anything towards whites but like ever since he's come from China, he's had it really hard with them. He just hasn't been treated properly by them. He pretty much sticks with other Orientals because of this and doesn't really like or associate with them unless he has to. Basically it's like he doesn't like the way he's treated here by them.*

Some of the non-white students indicated that not all people stand up for themselves when receiving the assault of racism. According to Phylica, *"most people don't speak out against racism when it happens because they're afraid of further criticism so they don't say anything."* Rose said people do not speak up against it

> ROSE: *...because they're scared. Especially if there's a big crowd and you're just like one single person. Of course you're not going to yell back....I wouldn't say anything but inside I'll think that their wrong and would be really upset and hurt. Because I don't understand why they would have to do that....I know it's a superiority thing okay, but don't they*

> *realize that it hurts. Why do they want to make someone feel that bad? What's the point?*

However, not all racism in society is as overt as the incidences mentioned by Phylicia and MR2. According to all of the students interviewed, the majority of racism in society today is subtle and/or covert. MR2 does not believe that a reduction in overt racism means that it has been diminished but rather *"people just learn how not to be rude towards others even if they're thinking it."*

Rodney was extremely open in discussing how he had never experienced racism but admitted being racist towards others.

> RODNEY: *I've never said it out to someone but like in my head and in my thoughts yes because I find it ignorant when people speak other languages that other people can't understand. It bothers me, it seems like they only hang around people that are the same colour as them, or the same religion or race or whatever, and I don't like that; that's when I think racist thoughts. I don't know, I just don't like it when their only friends are people that are only the same race as them. I think like go back to your own country, stuff like that. When people speak other languages I think if you want to speak that language so bad, go back to your own country where everyone else can understand what the hell you're saying so I don't have to listen to it... I see them as looking inferior and hating them. Well I don't know about hating them, it's such a strong word, but wanting them to go back to their own country. That's what you think or say. I'm not saying go up to their face and say go back to your own country. I'm not like that and I can't do that, why would I do that, I'm not that mean. I know most people in general think this way. I know some people that are ignorant enough to go up to them and tell them to do stuff, or whatever, make fun of them, I can't do that.*

Mike too admitted to being racist.

> MIKE: *You try not to be racist but ya you do think it sometimes. You just get mad and you just kinda look for something to pick apart on the person, and as soon as you don't have anything, you go straight to the "racial" thing and its just the poorest way of looking at someone. For me, something has to happen [in order for it to happen]. But for others that I know, it could just be someone walking down the street ha ha ha, look at that you know whatever. It's all "racial", like just the colour of their skin and how they look.*

Carrie too admitted to having *"negative thoughts towards Non-Caucasians."* However, she questioned whether her thoughts were necessarily racist.

> CARRIE: *I don't know if I'd call it being racist. Ya, I probably have [been racist] but not realizing I dislike these people because of their colour without realising I was even doing it. But I don't know if that's like being racist. (long pause) Well ya I guess it kind of is. Definitely when I watch TV and stuff is when I think racist thoughts because then I wonder why do these people do that!? You know how sometimes they show you on t.v. about other cultures and stuff, it just seems so, (long pause), I don't know so (long pause) weird and I wonder why they're like that. Plus on the news you know how they always are showing the problems other races are having. I don't know but I do think negatively about what I see and hear especially about people that are different races.*

Like Carrie, Rose, a non-white, questioned whether her thoughts towards other "races" was racist or not. She expressed a *"fascinat[ion] with the different types of races and just how the different faces look, like the features and colours...."* She discussed her reaction to a "Black girl's" picture to exemplify her point.

> ROSE: *I think I have thought racist thoughts but not like where I think negatively of the person because of their skin colour. I don't really mean to but it just happens sometimes and I actually don't know if it's racist or not. I don't know how to explain it. When I see a picture or something and I see a Black girl. She blends in and you can't really see her. I would think like why is her skin so dark. I don't think negatively of her, and think that I'm like better than her or something but I just wonder why her skin is so dark. How did the different races come about? I'm just curious about how we all came about as different humans, like the different races that's all. But I don't consider it racist. I guess because of my own race you just wonder about the different races and how they came about.*

All of the racism experienced by the non-white students along with the incidences of racism they had observed had been from "white" people. When I asked Carrie if she had ever experienced racism, her response affirmed the non-white students' experiences with racism as she admitted to only hearing of whites being racist.

> CARRIE: *(long pause) Well I've only heard it the other way around where my friends would say 'Oh look at those Orientals, they think they're all that. They just come over here and try to change the world and our country.' So like I've heard it that way but nothing towards myself or other white skinned people because we're Caucasian.*

When I asked students if white people experience racism, all of the students said they did not. Rose's exclamatory response was exemplary of the majority of the non-white students' reaction to my question.

> ROSE: *When!? I've never really thought so unless they've started it and then they're kind of yelled back at or something. But otherwise no!*

Some of the students, both non-white and white, felt that racism will never be abolished. Carrie felt that *"racism exists no matter what; it will always be at the back of one's mind so what's the point, why do anything about it."* Rose, too felt that racism will always exist.

> ROSE: *I think it'll happen either way. If we try to stop it, it won't just go away. It will always be there. I think it's lessened since years ago because there was lots of racism then. Like in the U.S. how Black people were treated. It would be great if it didn't exist but it all comes back to power, that's why it still exists and will always exist. That's what I think.*

During the interviews, the theme of "culture" in Canadian society also revealed alternative emphases and interpretations. One group of students tended to limit representation of "Canadian culture" to certain traditions and origins, notably "western." Rodney, Mike, Carrie, and Faith for example, defined themselves as "Canadians." When I asked these "Canadian" students to tell me about their culture, they struggled with conveying what the Canadian culture entails, who the Canadians as a people are, and what it means to be Canadian. Nevertheless they did attempt to respond.

> MIKE: *That's a difficult question to answer. We're proud people, peaceful, friendly compared to other countries, past times like hockey and drinking beer. For the most part just peaceful and proud.*

For Rodney, this was initially an extremely difficult question to answer, but he eventually answered it in terms of what Canada is not in relation to other countries.

> RODNEY: *It's hard to say what Canadian is. Well like we're involved in international affairs, we're involved with the UN. We're peaceful that type of thing. I'm proud to be Canadian that's for sure. I'm proud of how we're not like the Middle East and stuff like that; they're always having wars, they have such high crimes and stuff like that; I'm not saying that we don't have crime but we're not like that. I see these countries as being*

> *inferior to Canada and people from them. I find that we are inferior to the US just because they are so economically strong compared to us, and I find Great Britain is better than we are. I find we're better than Somalia and Bosnia and all of them because they can't even run their own country and I find them inferior to us. Also we're democratic, we care about people in our country.*

Rodney's response indicated that he perceives Non-Western countries and people from Non-Western countries as "inferior" in comparison to Canada/Canadians. The presence of "Non-Westerners" in Canada according to Rodney creates a polar existence within Canada's population.

> RODNEY: *Ya we really don't know what Canada is because we're all the same or something else because of multiculturalism.*

Rodney's perception of other countries around the world was "essentialist" in view. He believed that other countries were homogeneous with an "uni-racial" population and a specific religion attached to it. He felt that Canada was the exception globally by not having a specific religion attached to it due to the presence of many different "races" in Canada today.

> RODNEY: *Because we have all these different people [in Canada] we have all these different religions here now. You think of it like, I don't know what Chinese people are, but you know Pakistanis or Muslim or Hindus, have a specific religion, I don't know what [religion] they are, or in Ireland how they're Protestant or Catholic or whatever. We don't really have one (religion); I don't know what we are because we have so many different races in Canada. So how can we say that we even have a religion....Like we have Christianity and mostly everything is centered around it, like our holidays and stuff...[but] we have all these different religions here too that want to keep their ways.*

Defining the Canadian culture was also difficult for Carrie. Like Rodney, she too perceived other countries around the world to be mono"racial", monocultural, and monoreligious.

> CARRIE: *Well here we've got so many different races and stuff. Each of them have like different cultures and ways than us. For me, I don't know, it kind of makes it difficult to say what the Canadian culture is. Like when I was in Europe, it was mostly all Caucasian. I did see some other races and stuff there but like not very many. Everybody knew who the majority was and who the minority was. And like everyone was*

> *basically the same. We don't really have that here. There's just so many different people here. I don't know. It just makes me wonder sometimes.*

For Mike Canadian culture was hard to define because of the presence of others "races" and cultures in Canada. He feels the presence of other "races" takes away from the Canadian culture.

> MIKE: T*here's so many different cultures out there, we have so many of them, Chinese, Japanese, African, East Indian, and Jews. We Canadians don't have our own. Right now, we don't have a Canadian culture. I know there is a Canadian culture out there but I don't know if we've found it....Right now we don't have a Canadian culture because of all the different races here.*

When I asked Mike, whether he sees Canada's current multi-"racial" and multi-cultural composition making up the present Canadian culture he said *"No, No I don't."* To verify my interpretation of Mike's views, I asked if the presence of different "races" and cultures in Canada created a sense of chaos and unease for him.

> MIKE: *Yes it does create a feeling of chaos because there's just so many different people out there that we as Canadians barely have any idea of who or what we are. It just seems like we as Canadians don't stand out in our own country. All you see are other people here. When people come to Canada they should be Canadian. I worry about us white people here in Canada because like all you see are other people here in our country. Pretty soon we might be the minority.*

Rodney also expressed having a problem with immigrants in Canada. He felt the presence of others in Canada takes away from a "national Canadian identity". He blamed his inability to readily define the Canadian culture on "immigrants" and "immigration." Prior to sharing his response, Rodney paused and said *"I don't know if I should say this."* I said *"It's totally up to you...I promise no one will ever trace what you've said directly back to you...."* In a loud tone, Rodney expressed the following concerns without inhaling.

> RODNEY: *I don't know how having immigrants in Canada could be positive but negative I know because you're always bringing people in so you're always getting different kinds of people and that's why you don't know what Canadian is because there's always more people more people coming in that you don't know what Canadian is. I would rather be something that when you say Canadian you know what it is. I work at [a*

> *major department store] and I get so many people coming in that almost more than half of them have accents that I don't know what they are, and I can barely understand them because they can hardly speak English. And I find that negative, I find that we let too many people into our country. We have to know what we are before we can let more people in. Because I find that we have too many people that can barely even speak English. We have multiculturalism but we also have bilingualism, which is English and French, and half of the people that come into my work can't even speak English and I have to ask them 4 times to know what their trying to say before I can understand what the hell their saying, and I don't like that.*

For Rodney, Carrie, and Mike, multiple "races," "cultures" and "religions" were components in Canada that contributed to their difficulty in defining a Canadian culture. Faith too had problems with defining the Canadian culture. However, she did not attribute this to the presence of "Others" in Canada but rather as something to which she had not given any serious consideration. She perceived the "Canadian culture" to differ from the beliefs and values of other cultures around the world.

> FAITH: *It's kind of hard to define Canadian culture, it's not really something I've thought about. I know that there are things that we as Canadians do but like I think it's more about the individual here compared to other cultures. We don't have a set culture that we have to follow. Like my Muslim friend for example, I know that they celebrate different occasions together among their people. We celebrate things to but like they're not ritualistic. Am I making any sense?... I don't know, like I know we have a culture. We do have a set of beliefs and values, that are different from other cultures. I know we Canadians do things as one but to define it is hard. But at the same time, there are other people here[in Canada] and they have their own cultures here too and I think that's awesome because they have something solid to believe in. We Canadians I would say focus more on us, like the individual rather than what our culture says or expects of us. So I guess that's part of the Canadian culture; the individual as a person. We do things we want to do rather than things that are expected of us as a group because of tradition.*

Peter, who came to Canada from Yugoslavia in 1992 at the age of 11 was the only student who believed that Canada is truly multicultural as he did not perceive the existence of a majority group. Unlike Mike, he believed that *"multiculturalism is the Canadian culture."* When I asked him how he arrived at this conclusion he said:

> PETER: *How? well you kind of {pause}. I'm not sure actually. That's just basically how it was. You know I don't know. I'm not sure.*

> *I've always had a feeling of multiculturalism. You go to school, it's mixed. You go on a street it's mixed. That's how it is. Through observation I guess.*

Question number 25 of the survey questionnaire asked "How do you define multiculturalism?" It was found that multiculturalism was generally defined by both the white and non-white students in terms of various different "races" and cultures living in the same geographical area. This co-habitation further involved the notable exchange of ideas and beliefs while maintaining one's own culture. As some of the following quotations also indicate living together also entails acceptance and working together:

#9: *Different races and cultures living in the same place.*

#3: *Many people of many races joined together in an exchange of culture, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes.*

#22: *Many groups of people living in an area, working together yet still keeping their culture.*

#20: *A country or area containing groups of people of different races or beliefs.*

#30: *Multiculturalism is the ability to accept different peoples, cultures, and ideologies into your community, life, personal world.*

#27: *All the different cultures and races that all come together into one big country.*

#28: *The culmination of all people working together to achieve a common goal be it wealth or prosperity or just survival.*

#37: *I would define multiculturalism as a great deal of people with different backgrounds and beliefs living together like we have in Canada.*

#33: *All the different cultures and religions of the world living in the same area.*

40 out of the 41 (98%) students who participated in the survey questionnaire viewed multiculturalism as a positive component in Canadian society. One student felt that it was both positive and negative.

> #12: *I'd say it's positive because it allows cultures to understand each other better. It's negative because it can lead to a disjointed society, with people who care about 'the old country' more than Canada, where everybody has to take care of them.*

The following quotes are the white students' responses to question number 26 in the survey questionnaire which asked "Do you think multiculturalism is a positive or negative aspect of Canadian society?"

> #6: *Positive because it promotes tolerance and demands respect of all races since we live among them.*
>
> #11: *Positive. I feel it is good to have a mixture of races living together, because it widens our views of existence.*
>
> #15: *Positive. It helps people to be more open-minded.*
>
> #26: *Positive. Canada's society is such a liberal one that multiculturalism is beneficial to Canadians because it gives everyone a chance to explore other cultures without having to go to far.*
>
> #1: *Very positive. That is what makes Canada unique. Many cultures are accepted and practiced in Canada.*
>
> #39: *It's positive because it proves that people with different cultures and religions can live in the same place together.*
>
> #3: *Positive because it enriches our Canadian society and allows for many types of thought.*
>
> #28: *I think it is a positive aspect in Canada, it pushes past the prejudice of people and allows us to view people as people.*
>
> #31: *I believe it is a positive aspect of Canadian society because it allows us to have a more diverse view of the world. We are brought yp with the knowledge that we should respect all peoples and cultures. I believe that this is what allows us to act as a peace-keeping nation.*

During the in-depth interviews, it was found that 4 out of the 5 white students' views of multiculturalism were not consistent with what they had written in the questionnaire. In the questionnaire they had reported that multiculturalism was a positive aspect of Canadian society. However, during the in-depth interview in which they had elaborated on their responses, it was found that multiculturalism was more problematic than positive. Mike initially had stated that multiculturalism was *"positive because you have different viewpoints and aspects to ideas; two heads are better than one type thing. That can make you more open-minded to things and ideas."* But when discussing the concept of multiculturalism specifically within a Canadian context Mike had a different outlook.

> MIKE: *If you look at multiculturalism here, it's basically a bunch of cultures together which takes away from our national unity and pride. It's totally negative. Canada isn't about having a bunch of different cultures, it shouldn't be. Canada as a country has barley any idea of who or what we are. Because of this we are less patriotic and we consider issues of separation. I have absolutely no tolerance for this at all. If you don't like your country, GET OUT!*

Another aspect of multiculturalism that was negative for Mike was the presence of cultural diversity as opposed to homogeneity.

> MIKE: *Canadians speak one of the two national languages, or both. They don't stand out culturally, their involved in society and just kind of blend in with everyone in society, they don't stick out. When I see someone who looks, talks, dresses, basically looks like their from another country, it bugs me because their not making an attempt to become what we are especially when their in our country. Race isn't a big thing. But like culture and language is the biggest thing for me. Basically how they act, talk, and dress. People need to speak one of the two national languages. You sense that a lot of people don't take pride in Canada [particularly] people who look like they come from other countries, like you can tell they're from other countries. To give you an example my Chinese neighbours never speak English. It's always Chinese and that totally annoys me. If you're living in Canada why would you be proud of another country? When you hear something different, like someone with an accent you tend to think why does he have an accent? I wish they didn't. It's obvious they are not interested in being Canadian but are just here for themselves.*

Rodney had written in his questionnaire that multiculturalism was a *"positive aspect of Canadian society as other beliefs and values present themselves without having to go very far which benefits Canada."* During the interview, it was found that multiculturalism was also "negative" for him as he discussed his views regarding immigration.

> RODNEY: *We let in the most immigrants than any other country. I know we have an obligation to let them in but should we let so many of them in willingly? I think multiculturalism is dumb and dumber. I don't like multiculturalism because if you have so many cultures you don't have a Canadian one and you can't name Canadian because we have so many different cultures and I think it would be better if we just had one because we could call it Canadian. Like look at the Americans, they call themselves a melting pot or a bouquet of flowers, all different colours but their all one, and they all believe in one thing. I do find multiculturalism negative. We have to learn to become one culture so we can face more important problems in the world like our dollar.*

Contradictions also emerged in Faith's responses. Faith, believed that one of the strengths of a multicultural society is that *"all people are able to express themselves freely and openly because there's no real emphasis on having to follow one set culture."* In discussing her relationship with her best friend who is a Muslim, she respected her friend's religious belief which forbids her to eat "pork." However, when discussing deeper issues such as her best friend's cultural beliefs about marriage, she had a different outlook.

> FAITH: *Their in a different country now, I don't see the need for them to hold on to their beliefs about everything. Things are done differently here. I'm sure if she was back home it would be 'culturally' acceptable but here no one really follows strict traditions and I don't think she should. I think her family needs to realize that their in a different country now and whatever they do over there isn't what we Canadians do here. They need to realize this is Canada and that their in Canada now.*

Carrie too initially stated that multiculturalism was a positive aspect. The following is her written survey questionnaire response.

> CARRIE: *Multiculturalism is a positive aspect of Canada, that way hopefully everyone can feel at home. My prayer is one day we all will be able to live in a world without hate. Where everyone can be happy and accepted for who they are and what they believe.*

Yet she contradicts herself when discussing the maintenance of cultural values in Canada, other than "Canadian" values.

> CARRIE: *Yes I do think it is important for everyone to keep their ethnocultural values. However, I do believe that if you want to be a Canadian and live here, you should be proud of Canada and live by our ways. For example, I don't think that you should be able to wear turbans in the R.C.M.P.*

Carrie felt very strong about people living the "Canadian way." She then went on to say at the conclusion of her discussion:

> CARRIE: *I often wonder why people are picked on because of their race and culture and wonder why we haven't yet abolished racism.*

When I asked Carrie why individuals can not wear turbans she said *"I don't know. I just don't think it's Canadian."* Carrie compared the issue regarding turbans to other Western countries. She stated *"I know in other Western countries they don't allow turbans at all."* When I asked her how she knew this she said *"because I know, well I know for sure in Britain they don't allow that kind of stuff."* I conveyed to her the fact that my Uncle was the first turbaned police officer in London England's history. It was at that point that Carrie realized she was speaking to a Sikh. No one else in the study, other than Carrie and David[12] knew. I was just perceived as an East Indian. Her response to turbaned police officers was as follows.

> CARRIE: *Sometimes you have to make a stand. If it's not one thing then it's the other. We are the majority group here, not them. If we give people all these rights, it's not going to be Canada anymore, it'll be something else.*

Carrie began to suddenly blame her grandfather for her "racist" outlook. But then immediately she turned the argument around and said

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[12] David knew that I was a Sikh because he himself is Sikh and could tell from my name.

> CARRIE: *Sikhs are very prejudice against Caucasians. You begin to wonder where their (Sikh) values are coming from. Is it just to get revenge? Or is this an honest opinion? Or is it actually because of their religion?*

Although Carrie does not know any Sikh people her Uncle apparently did. She claimed he said *"they're doing it to get back at them (whites) for the past."* Carrie believed her Uncle and said

> CARRIE: *I know Sikhs are prejudiced towards Caucasians. They're wearing the turban to defy Canadians. These people are not willing to give up their cultures. Their not willing to give up their beliefs because they're going to be stubborn. Some people are respectable and then others like the Sikhs and the Muslims give off the impression that they're going to do this just because we Canadians don't want them to. They're showing off. Sometimes you get that impression from those who aren't willing to give up their culture and be Canadian.*

For Carrie then, the Sikhs' religious/cultural values were not important factors in wearing the turban as was their motivation to "get back" at the Canadians for past injustices. Carrie concluded by stating *"...you just get frustrated with those who try to force their beliefs on to you."*

The turban issue also surfaced as a concern for Rodney and Mike. They felt that the presence of turbans, not just in the RCMP but in Canadian society was unacceptable. For Mike, he feels that they *"stand out"* and are in fact *"disrespecting*" Canadians.

> MIKE: *The way I see them, they don't look right in Canada. It's just not Canadian to me. When I see someone who looks like they're from another country, it bugs me because their not making an attempt to become what we are and in my opinion that's showing great disrespect for the majority of us Canadians.*

Rodney shared his perception of a Sikh wearing a turban in Canada.

> RODNEY: *Well I'm sure wherever they came from they were raised there and that's their religion and they bring it over here. But like I don't understand why they keep holding on to that once they've been here for a while and live the way we do in our society. I don't really like that. The way I see them is it's as if they are not interested in being Canadian, they're interested in staying the way they were wherever they came from. They're not interested in being Canadian just living here because this is a*

> *better country. They're not interested in our style of living they just want to live here. Like if they're going to hang on to their beliefs and the way what ever they do, then why even live here? What's the use?*

Rodney's response implied that only those Sikh individuals who immigrate to Canada continue to wear turbans in Canada. In our conversation, I had shared my Sikh-Canadian friend's experience with him. I explained how my friend's great-grandfather and grandfather immigrated to Canada in the late 1800s to work in the lumber mills in British Columbia, as well as how he and his father were born in Canada. I then went on to share that over the generations, each successive member wore a turban. My friend who has extensive historical roots in Canada, longer than Rodney's family, and has never left North America, continues to wear a turban as well. People are always caught off guard with him because they expect him to have an accent and behave a certain way given his exterior appearance. Rodney responded by saying

> RODNEY: *I don't see why he'd still keep wearing the turban or whatever. Maybe he's trying to hold on to his ancestors but I don't see why he should live in the past. I don't like people who live in the past.*

In contrast, Peter felt *"very happy"* when he sees a Sikh wearing a turban. He and David were the only students who were aware that wearing the turban is an important part of the Sikhs' religion and identity. Based on Carrie's response, I asked him if he thought Sikhs were wearing turbans to "show off and defy Canadians?"

> PETER: *No. I don't think it's showing off, I think it's more like that's what my culture is, that's how it is and I follow that. I don't consider it a fashion statement or anything, it's what they value. If they didn't value wearing a turban they wouldn't be wearing it, but they do . If that's their belief, I'm fine with it. Like in Christianity they have their own beliefs to so you know people have things that are specific to their religion, all religions do....As far as defying Canadians, I don't think so they are because basically they are Canadians too you know.*

Peter then related the RCMP issue with the wearing of the turbans in the Canadian legion branches.

> PETER: *I think the issue is kind of similar to the legion branches welcoming the turbans. They were basing them on European rules basically. In Europe its considered rude to go into a church with a hat on, and that's basically what they're (Canadians) going with. But that's not*

> *the way it is in the Sikh religion. They wear the turban because of their religion. So you see, you do have those clashes and I couldn't tell the Sikhs they couldn't wear it inside [the legion]. I don't feel they want to cause any disrespect for other people, or anything. Its basically what they do wear. They didn't just put it on before they went and filled out the RCMP application. They did wear it, I'm not sure from what age they start, but like all their life, and I don't think they should change themselves because of one European rule.*

Peter felt that Sikhs were eventually allowed to wear turbans in the RCMP *"because there was enough support by people."* He felt this support was historically rooted given that Sikhs wore turbans during the colonial times when they served in the British army (Buchignani, 1977; Singh, 1994; Singh, 1995)

> PETER: *Well, they did let turbans be worn, so I'm guessing there was enough public pressure to make it happen. You see in the British empire, they were allowed to wear turbans in the army, it was part of their army gear. I don't see the difference with the past and now. They wore turbans when they were British soldiers while they were fighting in the war alongside with the British; it was acceptable. I don't see how they are causing disrespect today.*

Out of all of the 5 white students interviewed, Peter was the only white student who consistently felt that multiculturalism was a positive aspect of Canadian society as evidenced by his responses in both the questionnaire and in depth interview. However, his perception of multiculturalism was not always positive given the ethnic war he witnessed occurring in his country of Yugoslavia.

> PETER: *When you have multiculturalism you do have that path of aggression like in Yugoslavia we have 26 different nationalities. But when you have a country that's truly multicultural, like you see it everywhere, you have less problems [because] you learn to respect different nationalities, you learn not to prejudge. I think that's what helped me see this positive side of multiculturalism was in Canada. Because I did not know of different nationalities living together and getting along. I find with multiculturalism it's positive because you are not stuck in a certain environment where you just learn about one thing and one thing only, this way you get more views and more opinions about stuff.*

The non-white students' responses in both the questionnaire and in-depth interviews consistently indicated that they felt multiculturalism was a positive aspect of

Canadian society. The following quotes are the non-white students' responses to question number 26 in the survey questionnaire which asked "Do you think multiculturalism is a positive or negative aspect of Canadian society?"

> #33: *Definitely positive. What makes Canadian society strong is all of our differences. Different cultures and different minds. It makes our country diverse and open to anything.*
>
> #35: *Positive. I believe Canada is the most multicultural open minded & understanding about diverse cultures. Not only that, is strives to educate about them.*
>
> #32: *I think multiculturalism in Canadian society is positive. There is the occasional time when you'll hear of two cultures not getting along, but overall, most people generally get along no matter what their background.*
>
> #38: *Positive because the reason why some people come to Canada is because they have opportunity and freedom.*
>
> #41: *I would say a positive aspect considering how this city does have stores that are 'cultural' stores such as the China town, etc.*

Sapna found multiculturalism to be a positive aspect of Canadian society as it *"opens doors to new ideas and people get to experience what another culture's lifestyle is like."* She compared living in Fiji, her birthplace, a country that is "racially" and somewhat culturally homogenous" (even though in reality Fiji has two distinct major cultural groups), with Canada which she saw as "racially" and culturally heterogeneous.

> SAPNA: *I like it this way [in Canada] better than I would have liked it in Fiji maybe. Reason being because I've lived here longer maybe. In Fiji, all the values are the same, the people are the same. In a multicultural society you're open to so many new ideas so it benefits us in many ways. It benefits me by I'm more aware of other cultures, and not tied down to my own Brown culture. I learn new things about different cultures.*

She perceived homogeneity, particularly values, as a negative component of a country. She discussed Fijian values and relayed the example of dating and sex.

> SAPNA: *If you live in a place that's the same, where there's no dating and no sex before marriage. Everyone in Fiji would believe that. In Canada, it's not like that, they don't judge you if you do something wrong, there's always doors open for you. If you make a mistake you learn from it. In Fiji, if you got pregnant, everyone would be talking about you, and you'd probably be thrown out of your home. Here it's not like that, there's resources here to help if anything like that ever happened.*

For Phylicia, multiculturalism's ideology implied an "acceptance" for all in Canada.

> PHYLICIA: *I think multiculturalism in Canada is unique because everyone views all different cultures as being okay. We have many cultures living together peacefully and no one persecutes anyone else for who they are. Sometimes groups in society will have differences, but it's not going to lead to a war or anything you know.*

For MR2, multiculturalism initially implied *"equality for all."* In further exploring MR2's use of the term "equality" it was later found that he did not believe that *"equality for all"* exists, *"especially for those who are not white."* He shared an example of how his family was *"scammed"* because, according to him, they *"weren't white."*

> MR2: *Well in multiculturalism there should be equality for all but there's inequality. When we bought our house, they scammed us. We paid an extra $5000 for our house because I guess they thought we were stupid or something and they thought that they could get away with it. Like I was pretty young at the time, and my parents couldn't speak English very well. They took advantage of that. It upsetted me a lot because you're basically not seen as equal to them...the white people. It's like this is suppose to happen to you; you're suppose to be treated like a second class citizen. You find that a lot. I know some other people this kind of stuff has happened to plus a lot of other things.*

Among the white students, Carrie, Rodney, and Mike believed that multiculturalism implied having to give individual groups specific rights and privileges in Canada which to them was problematic.

Mike felt that if every group in Canada was given "special" rights *"then Canada would be split into over 200 different nations."* He believed that *"if people want to live in Canada, they should follow our ways."* The presence of "Others" in Canada was "threatening" to Mike as he felt that the Canadian culture would be supplanted by another.

> MIKE: *Personally if someone wants to be Chinese...either act, speak, [and/or] dress...then they should go back to China. I have no tolerance for people who don't make an attempt to be Canadian. That tells me that their here for their own personal means and I don't like that. I just feel that if we allow people certain rights, like what I've mentioned before, the speaking, dressing, and behaving, we're not going to have a Canadian culture. It's like their going to take over our culture. We're gonna have a new culture, ours (Canadian) is going to be taken away. I do feel a little threatened by this. Like if you look at Chinese people, their everywhere. If we keep giving minorities rights, then they'll keep staying the way they are, they won't make an attempt to be Canadian. They'll push their culture on to the rest of us. I think Canada should just have one culture, Canadian.*

Rodney felt that minorities were not entitled to rights given Canada's already established infrastructures. He felt that problems stemmed from minorities themselves who were not willing to comply with the systemic structures.

> RODNEY: *To me it's really simple. If you want to live here then you have to do things the way that their done here. Why even bother coming here then? If people want to live the way they do in their country then they should just stay there but we have our own culture in Canada. Like I personally wouldn't have let the turban been worn in the RCMP. It's not Canadian. You hear in the news and stuff how people are always complaining about racism and stuff, or how like they didn't get hired because of the colour of their skin, or people weren't let into clubs because of their skin colour. It's all stupid. I don't know. It just seems like their always having problems. They just can't accept things as they are in Canada, they always want to change things all the time. That's all you ever hear about problems, and more problems with them.*

It is also clear that although the First Nations Peoples are Canada's original people, they were boxed in with the "Other" category. In discussing Native issues with the students, all of the non-white students, Peter, and Faith felt that the Natives should have their Native land rights back and past injustices should be ameliorated whereas Rodney, Mike, and Carrie did not share a similar perspective. Carrie felt there should be "co-existence."

> CARRIE: *I think we should all be able to live together. I don't know their (First Nations Peoples) whole belief system so I don't know if they believe we can but I think we should co-exist. You know, as far as I understand you can't just go to a Native reserve, build a house and live there unless you have Native rights. So, it works the same way, well not the same way because they can move to the city. It's almost like, they say that we're prejudice against them but it's kinda like they're prejudice against Canadians as a whole, those that are Caucasians. You can't go and live at a Native thing but they expect to have the right to come live over here to a city. Like I understand it was their land and stuff but I think it should be everyones now. I don't know what the solution is. If they want to live on the reserves I don't have a problem with that. But I think they also need to understand that Canadians are growing too, and we need resources and stuff. So it's kind of like sharing, like a trading system.*

Giving this co-existence solution, I asked Carrie who follows whose way? Whose lifestyle would prevail?

> CARRIE: *I don't know, I don't know, I don't know (hesitant). They have their right to their reserves. I know that ultimately the society way would probably prevail because they are larger and stuff. Society probably wouldn't want to live as the Natives would want us to live and I guess the Natives don't want to live as we want them to live too. According to the media, they want the same privileges as us but don't want to live as we do. If you want to have a view like our society well then you're free to live by it but we don't want to live by your society.*

The remainder of the students interviewed did not find *"minority rights"* to be as problematic nor did they discuss it in as much depth as Mike, Rodney, and Carrie, given their unproblematic orientation of multiculturalism in Canada. The "minority" students were aware of Canada's "culture" and felt that they were respectful of it. As Sapna noted

> SAPNA: *Sometimes when there's public issues and stuff, I find that some people are really ignorant and racist, especially when it's about Ethnic non-white people. The majority of non-white people do respect the "norms" and ways that are out there. Like just because I speak Hindi, it doesn't mean that I feel that everyone should have to speak Hindi or that all of my education and everybody else's should have been on Hinduism. I feel that people have a right to be who they want to be. We are in Canada and do respect the culture. I don't think that people come here, or those that have been here from many generations, want things to be their way. Like for myself, I know that I'm Hindu, but I'm also Canadian. I can't say I'm 100% of either. I'm a mix of both. I know that when people see me that don't know me, they think oh ya she's a total Brownie or whatever.*

> *But I've lived here for most of my life and have a lot of this culture in me too. If people want to fight for their rights, they have the right to do so. I think some things could change. Besides I think Canada will be seeing a lot more changes in the future, especially since how we're becoming more and more multicultural.*

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND INTERPRETIVE DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the contemporary knowledge, views, and perspectives of grade twelve students upon the immediate completion of high school regarding "race," culture and ethnic relations within Canadian society. A crucial point of reference, indicated by the students themselves, which was foundational to their present view of Canadian society was that of Canada's history itself. Their conceptual framework of Canadian history, as it was taught to them in school, was both exclusive and incomplete. The core of their knowledge centred primarily around the British and French experience of simply "finding," "establishing," and "settling" in Canada. For three of the white students, their account resonated the colonial ideology of "civilizing." None of the students mentioned, discussed, or were aware of the institutionalized physical and/or cultural genocide imposed on to the Natives by the colonizers in direct relationship to the "finding," "settlement," and "establishment" period in Canada's history (Altbach and Kelly, 1978; Anderson and Frideres, 1981; Frideres, 1988; Owen, et al, 1967; Pauls, 1996; Ponting, 1997), nor did they possess the capacity to articulate the Native Peoples' account of history prior to, and during the arrival of the Europeans during the colonization era. These findings are not surprising given the wealth of documented literature by critical educationalists like Apple (1976; 1992), Dei (1996), Giroux (1981; 1986), Apple (1976), (1992), who have highlighted the Eurocentric biased orientation present in official and hidden curricula as well as in (official) textbooks as the existence, histories, and experiences of Others are unaccounted for and ignored within the structural politics of education. Frideres (1998) points out the necessity to realize that within the Canadian context, "the history of Canada that is taught from Grade Five through university has been written mainly by English-speaking Euro-Canadians, specifically of British ethnicity" (p. 13). In their examination of elementary Canadian history books, the Ontario Education Commission "discovered that many historical events involving Aboriginal peoples have not even been recorded. In fact, the commission found that many history books did not discuss the role of Indians in Canadian history at all (cited in Frideres, 1998, p. 13). It was both directly and indirectly communicated by all students that the Natives' vast history in Canada was irrelevant and extraneous to contemporary "white" modern Canada which was "founded" and "established" by British and French "settlers." Although a small number of European colonizers did indeed arrive in Canada in the 1500s, the students' narratives indicated that they were not aware that it was only during the first half of this century that the majority of Europeans "came/settled"[13] to Canada marking Canada's "white" population growth and expansionism (Driedger, 1996; Taylor, 1991; Ungerleider, 1996). Furthermore, the students were unaware of Canada's overt racist immigration policies during this very time period of heavy European immigration which openly discouraged and prohibited non-white settlement in Canada except when labour shortages emerged in which case non-white human labour was systematically imported to Canada from other colonized countries (Bolaria and Li, 1988; Tomic and Trumper, 1992). Just as the students were not aware of the First Nations Peoples' history and contributions in Canada, they were also unaware of the histories and contributions of noteworthy non-whites such as the Blacks (Alexander and Glaze, 1996; Bolaria and Li, 1988; Winks, 1971) and the East Indians (Jagpal, 1994; Raj, 1980; Singh, 1994) in Canada's history. The students were aware of the existence of the Chinese and Japanese in Canada earlier this century but their momentary reference and understanding of them was limited to simply as "labourers." Consequently, the totality of historical information conveyed/not conveyed to these students at school regarding European settlers, Canada's First Nations Peoples, and other colonized non-whites provided students with the conceptual premise of a richly fixed rooted history of whites in Canada thereby regarding the Canadian identity to solely be synonymous with white. Transmitting a fragmented framework of Canada's historical evolution in Canadian schools, which utilize only the Euro-dominant groups' historical interpretive experiences as representative of Canadian history while simultaneously silencing and writing out the extensive histories, struggles, and contributions of Others in Canada not only champions the hegemonic colonial ideology of a white Canada found earlier this century, but sustains unequal power relations among the dominant and marginal groups in society (Apple, 1979; Dei, 1996; Ghosh, 1996). As Frideres (1988) points out

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[13] Notably, the students always referred to the Europeans as either "coming over" or "settling" as opposed to immigrating. Use of the latter term was employed when discussing non-Europeans.

> our [Canadian] historians have largely been Euro-Canadians....[These] empowered groups have been able to define history and provide an explanation of the present....Because the dominant group [is] able to make these interpretations and definitions, it [is] also able to keep others from initiating alternative explanations or definitions. History gives credence and legitimacy to a society's normative structure; to legitimize its power, the dominant groups must reconstruct social history whenever necessary....[I ask] what Aboriginals have been encouraged to write histories? And when Aboriginal histories have been written, why have they been dismissed as fabrications?....The early reconstructions of Canadian history [by the dominant group] were effective: today, most Canadians continue to associate "savage" and "heinous" behaviour with Canadian Aboriginals (p. 12).

Similarly, Anchan and Holychuk (1996) argue that "...for a long time, textbooks and other media in the West have ignored or denied the existence of people of different ethnic backgrounds, races, and cultures" given North America's multicultural aspect" (p. 93). One major result of this exclusionary process both in the prescribed curriculum and in the classroom is it creates and sustains the myth among successive generations of students "...that the arrival of immigrants to Canada from non-European countries is a recent phenomenon" in "white" Canada hence wrongfully misrepresenting the histories of those Marx and Engels have labelled "peoples without history" (ibid; cited in Larrain, 1989, p. 57).

Despite the transmission of a fragmented framework of Canadian history, multiculturalism was viewed as a positive component of Canadian society by all of the students that completed the survey-questionnaire. However, the in-depth interviews later revealed that for 4[14] out of the 5 white students, multiculturalism was in fact a negative component of Canadian society. For these four "Canadian" students, the presence of different "races" and "cultures" within Canada make it difficult to define and pinpoint the

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[14] These four "White" students identified themselves as "Canadians." The fifth White student, Peter, who is a recent immigrant himself from Yugoslavia, did not view multiculturalism as a negative component of Canadian society.

"Canadian" identity given that the presence of people from Other "races" and "cultures" "look," "talk," "act," and "dress," differently, and "look like their from another country." The retention and basic human rights of "language," "accent," "religion," "customs," "beliefs," "dress," and "culture" by "immigrants" were problematic for them as they did not conceive the need for them to continue to maintain these elements given that "they are in a different country now." The right to retain, and consequent existence of these elements in Canada were deemed to be "disrespectfully" "stand[ing] out" in Canadian society. These views were also echoed by adult Anglo-Canadians in Berry et al's 1975 Majority Attitudes Study (Palmer, 1994). These "Canadian" students' narratives ultimately revealed their unacceptance of "racial" and cultural diversity within Canadian society given the threat it presents to Canada's national identity and culture, as well as to their power as the dominant group; beliefs echoed by adult Canadians in the 1991 government Multiculturalism Attitude Survey (Ungerleider, 1996; Driedger, 1996). Similar beliefs regarding multiculturalism were also found in James's (1995) discussions with the white high school, college, and university students. The topics of Sikhs being granted the right to wear turbans in the police force was also the very example highlighted by these white students. As James points out criticisms towards those whose religious practices and symbols are well preserved by Canadian laws and institutions are very often criticized by the dominant group (1995, p. 195). For example, one student in his study stated:

> I was never a fan of the Multicultural Act and if anything I find myself even more opposed to it now....[I]t sure makes my blood boil to hear that Sikhs can wear their turbans in police forces....On the topic of Canadian identity...not only does Canada open its arms and borders to accept immigrants from all over the world, something that doesn't bother me, it also willingly changes CANADIAN traditions and customs to accommodate them. In essence, what the Canadian government is doing is saying, "Hi, welcome, culture, don't worry about learning one of the two official languages in this country. In fact, if there are any traditions that have been around in Canada for a long time that you do not like, let us know, we will either exclude you from them or change them all just for you." What this Multicultural Act has really done is given everyone a chance to change Canada and make it more like the countries they left in the first place (pp. 177-178).

Another stated:

> The idea that Sikhs are being allowed to wear their turbans on a police force makes me very, very mad. I know that in Canada everyone has the freedom of religion and there is nothing wrong with that. However, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is like rules and regulations. The police force has rules and regulations and under those there is a uniform rule that states that every police officer must wear a hat. I don't think that it is right that a Sikh may change that rule. It is not fair to the rest of the police force. In fact, I think that it is an insult to this country. If I went to their country there would be no way in hell that I or any other white man would be able to change any of their rules.

James (1995) points out that a lack of knowledge of Others' established histories in Canada perpetuate and ignite unnecessary criticism by the dominant group.

> Generally, Canadians do not know that the Sikh religion has been in Canada for generations, that the first Sikh temple or *gurdwara* was opened in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1908 (Burnet and Palmer, 1989). On the basis of longevity alone, this should be seen as an established Canadian religion (p. 195).

Non-white students' views regarding multiculturalism within Canada remained consistent both within the survey questionnaire and in the in-depth interviews. They viewed multiculturalism as a positive component of Canadian society and possessed significantly differing views than their white "Canadian" peers. For these students, differences as well the opportunity to be exposed to and learn about other cultures and their respective ideologies were regarded as positive. Each of the non-whites students' discussions centering around multiculturalism focussed more on the "unequal" and "different" treatment and secondary status of non-whites within multicultural "white" Canadian society. They sensed and believed that they are not "accepted" by whites in society. This belief stemmed primarily from their first hand experiences and observations with covert and overt racism in society. Unlike their white peers, their everyday experiences with all forms of racism, individual, cultural, systemic, polite, subliminal, and institutional (Fleras and Elliot, 1996), remind them that they are operating within a macroframework of white dominance and power (Dei, 1994; Grabb, 1990; Razak, 1998). For these particular Non-white students who have been born and/or raised in Canada, in addition to experiencing routine racism, their sense of positional "inferiority" and sense of "not belonging" and being "accepted" in Canada is further penetrated by the routinely asked question(s) "where are you from?" and/or "when did you come to Canada?" Although all people in Canada are essentially immigrants to Canada or descendants of immigrants, with the exception of the First Nations Peoples, ideologically asking this questions seems acceptable given that immigration has characterized post-modern Canada. However, this inquiry, as explained by all (white and non-white) students, is only directed towards Non-whites by whites as exemplified in the students' narratives. This process of identifying, labelling, and assigning non-white individuals into fixed authentic identities solely on the basis of their "racial" construction is extremely problematic particularly in a post colonial era given that past historical occurrences such as colonization, slavery, migration, and immigration have contributed to the metamorphosis and heterogeneity in cultural identities locally and globablly (see for example Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1995; James and Shadd; 1994) and continue to, thereby problematizing and contradicting the guise of the "authentic identity" and "authentic culture" (hooks, 1990; Jagodzinski, 1997). Moreover, the sustained existence of these types of questions continue to remind all "minorities," "racial minorities," "visible minorities," "non-whites," whatever their political label, of their inherent "Otherness" and inferiority in relation to the dominant group as they are continuously reminded they do "not belong" (Desai, 1994; McKague, 1991). Furthermore, the retention and cultural transmission of these types of questions continue to not only situate all non-whites as immigrants or "newcomers" in Canadian society (Saram, 1993, p. 8) and whites[15] as citizens or "founders" (ibid) that are "normative" Canadians (Lynn, 1994; Satzewich, 1992) but they subtly yet clearly echo the racist ideologies found earlier this century hence reinforcing and sustaining the historical hegemonic ideology of a white Canada from one generation to the next (Kallen, 1995; Razak, 1998; Roy, 1989).

Among the many findings within the context of this chapter, one seems particularly significant, namely that of the students' reference to Canada's history in relation to their present understanding and perspectives of Canadian society. The students' historical conceptual framework as it is taught to them in schools, does not adequately prepare and equip some students for participation in a multicultural society, as the issues surrounding aboriginal issues, multiculturalism, immigration, "race," culture, national identity, and identity are also explosive points of contestation at the turn of the century among the youth. Given that the past and present co-exist and inform one another (Hall, 1990; Robertson, 1986), students, especially within Canada, would benefit from having an "inclusive" history conveyed that rightfully transmits the First Nations Peoples' account of history, critically explores and examines early immigration policies designed by the colonizers, as well as the extensive histories and contributions of non-whites in colonial Canada. All histories within colonial Canada have rightfully contributed to the development of contemporary Canada and are equally worthy of teaching and learning to better understand the orientation and rights of Others within multicultural Canada.

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[15] The term White here refers specifically to one's skin colour, and acknowledges that those that are white skinned, can "pass" as "Canadian" due to their "racial" construction.

Furthermore, conveying the political, economical, cultural, and individual roots and effects of colonization would contextualize and enhance students' understanding and existence of post-colonial identities (hybrid, bicultural, hyphenated, non-hyphenated, non-essentialist) given that within the context of this study it was found that individuals' identities were continued to be based solely on the basis of one's “racial” construction. Because non-white students have lived the complexity associated with the formation and social positioning of their own post-modern cultural identities, they possess a conceptual understanding of the existence of multiple identities and are able to translate this understanding on to all others, whereas the white students, with the exception of Peter, who is a first generation immigrant to Canada, were not. Non-white “racial” groups in Canada were viewed by white students as essentialized "immigrants" possessing monolithic homogeneous cultures and identities. The results within the context of this study revealed that "whiteness" is not a stable identity applicable to all "whites" but rather requires recoding and redefinition given the multiplicity of identities found within this “racial” category. The guise of an authentic white culture nullifies the rich heterogeneity among whites who are not a monolithic homogeneous group but rather are composed of various (amalgamated) ethnic groups, but who on the basis of skin colour are clustered under the category of white consequently “passing” all whites in Canada as Canadian as predicted and intended by the Canadian government earlier this century.

Many theorists such as Bhabha (1994), Dei, (1996), Hall, (1990), McCarthy and Crichlow, (1993), Said (1993), stress the inaccuracy and dangers of possessing an essentialist view of "race," culture, and identity. They argue that social groups should not be regarded and/or treated as homogeneous stable entities with a fixed monolithic culture whose members possess innate characteristics that differentiate them from other social groups entirely as it disregards the fact that individual identities are situated and interconnected to a wealth of ongoing social and historical factors which result in the constant production and reproduction of one's identity (see also Bock, 1988). In an era of rapid global migration marked by increased projections of "racial" and cultural diversity in Canada at the turn of the twenty-first century, participation in a multi-"racial" multi-cultural Canada is a reality. Despite modern Canada's official proclamation to multiculturalism as a defining characteristic of its nation, the findings reveal that racism, unacceptance, discrimination, misunderstandings, and "racial" power inequities continue to actively operate within the shadow of Canada's humane and just reputation among this upcoming generation. This chapter provided first hand insights into the views, perspectives, and knowledge of students regarding "race," culture, and ethnicity within Canadian society for academics, policy makers, teachers, board members, government, project teams, and others, to use to further prepare students for respectful and equal citizenship and participation in a multicultural society.

CHAPTER V

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITHIN TODAY'S "RACIALLY" AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE CANADIAN SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore and understand the inter-cultural and inter-"racial" dynamics within schools as perceived by the student participants. The chapter begins by looking at what the content has taught the students about their ethnocultural background as well as that of others. The discussion then focuses on the students' perception of "race relations" within their schools, and concludes by exploring the students' ideas about possible ways of promoting inter-cultural understanding for the next generation.

CURRICULUM AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS

Based on the survey findings and interviews, the majority of white students felt that the curriculum content was very supportive of their ethnocultural background. Some articulated that although they did not learn a lot about their backgrounds from home or from their parents and relatives, school was definitely a site whereby they could and did learn about their European background/roots and history. The following results are from question number 13 in the survey questionnaire which asked "Do you think your educational experience thus far has been supportive of your ethnocultural background?"

> #8: *The schooling I have endured has been very beneficial as the social classes have talked about ethnic background like French and Ukrainian.*
>
> #4: *I've learned more in school about French and English than by my family whose cultures are French and English.*
>
> #5: *We learn a lot about Canada, Austria, and Germany's roles in the war which is good for me to know.*

> #12: *In elementary school, my parents stupidly put me in a Ukrainian/English program. This is only a small part of my background. Also, in school, we only talk about German history, and never about Holland.*

> #7: *Education has not really effected my ethnocultural background. I mean sure I have learned about my past but nothing that would cause me to change my day to day living.*

> #25: *Yes, there are Ukrainian classes you can take at my high school. This is good, especially for me.*

> #24: *Elementary and Junior High was of a Christian atmosphere which grounds values into you for your daily future living.*

During the interview, Carrie relayed her interest in knowing about her ethnocultural roots, as well as understanding how and why her parents came to Canada as she mentioned that it was not something that was discussed in the home. Nevertheless, she felt that schools provided an excellent source for her.

> *CARRIE: I would like to know why and how my parents came to Canada. School does a good job of telling you what Canada is all about. We don't talk about this at home at all for some reason. My Mom doesn't know because her parents never told her....My parents told me about a little about their history, but I learned about my roots mostly from school.*

In contrast, most of the non-white students reported not learning about their individual backgrounds in the curriculum and felt their schooling did not reflect their ethnocultural background, roots, history, or contributions as it does the background of their white peers'. As Phylicia pointed out *"if my parents were from Europe or something like that I would have learned a lot about my background."* The following are the Non-whites students' responses regarding question number 13 in the survey questionnaire.

> #34: *Not much concern in Chinese culture.*

> #32: *Basically the only "Blacks" we ever learn about are African, but I'm not African. We never really hear much about Jamaica or the Caribbean.*

> *#33: Throughout my schooling, I have been encouraged to talk or write about it, but not to any great extent do we study it or something like that.*
>
> *#41: I would say no because most of the material we learn in school hardly ever connects to the East Indian culture, it's all about the white culture.*
>
> *#35: I want more information about my Chinese cultural roots.*

During the course of the interviews, the non-white students elaborated on their responses to this question. Even though Rose admitted *"the curriculum does not make me feel good about who I am because it doesn't represent who I am and sometimes I can't relate you know,"* she did not object being enculturated into a Eurocentric curriculum.

> *ROSE: It's fine that the curriculum doesn't have anything to do with the Vietnamese culture because it's not fair if they specifically base everything on Vietnamese culture because not everybody in the class is Vietnamese.*
>
> *TKC: Is it fair that the curriculum is based solely from a European perspective considering not all are Europeans, or descendants of Europeans in the classroom?*
>
> *ROSE: Well that's just kind of been the norm I guess, the normal way, the way it's always been so everyone's adjusted to it. No one's really thought of it as being unfair or anything; like no one's really thought about it and really questioned it. That's just the way it is.*

Sapna and MR2 also did not object to being educated within a Eurocentric curriculum. For Sapna, although she is very interested in learning about her Hindu culture, she feels that it is independent of her school environment.

> *SAPNA: I like to keep up with my culture and stuff and I do at home and at the temple and stuff. I can't really read Hindi very well so I have to rely on texts written in English. But even those can be bias you know because like the author puts their own interpretation on it. Most of the time I just ask my grandmother and stuff, but I hardly get time because I'm so busy with school and stuff. I don't mind that I'm not learning about the Hindu culture at school because there's so many other cultures to learn about. But we did talk about Gandhi and non-violence but it wasn't to any great depth or anything; like he was just mentioned kind of thing. I can say that I wouldn't have minded if we spent a little bit more time on it because it was interesting. I'm not saying it just because I am a Hindu,*

> *but from what I know of Gandhi, he seems like an interesting person. But we learn a lot about Europe and stuff but I guess that's because Canada's got that connection with Britain and the Hindu culture and other cultures don't.*

Non-white students were far more vocal and critical of how, and what is taught about other cultures. The students vividly recalled learning about the Japanese culture in school. They learned that *"their traditional dress is called a "kimono"* and that is what they wear, they *"eat sushi and rice with chopsticks while sitting on the ground, and they drink tea.*" When I asked them if they had learned about any other cultures they said *"no."* Rose found the presentation of content quite problematic as she applied it in relation to her own culture. She was aware that the Japanese culture entailed far more than just what multicultural analysts have labelled the 4Ds: dialect, dance, dress, and diet.

> *ROSE: I don't think that they wear kimonos all day, they do have normal regular clothes, don't eat sushi all day either. For example when you go to a Vietnamese restaurant they have spring rolls, we don't eat spring rolls all day we have other foods. They teach us the basic things (about other cultures) like what they eat, wear, that's it or about the climate. They don't really tell you anything about their day to day lives. Everything always seems to be presented in a traditional way. I haven't been to Japan but I know it's quite modern, like the cities and stuff, and I don't expect to see everybody in kimono's, you know what I mean.*

The students also noted that they were taught about other cultures but not in depth as the case of Japan. As David stated *" we don't learn specifically about cultures extensively. We don't learn about their values or everyday lives. Usually they're just mentioned and then that's it."* Rose admitted that *"we learned basic things, nothing emotional. You don't know them, you don't connect with them."* All of the non-white students, Faith, and Peter echoed the same sentiments and reported that whenever other cultures are discussed or brought up in class, *"they'll skim over them without going into any real depth or exploring things further"* (Faith). Sapna felt that it was important to *"not dismiss a topic in class just because it's not about the white culture."*

> *SAPNA: You know how Canada's multicultural but most of it is white though. Well teachers just touch on some of the subjects relating to us ethnics and don't go into detail about them. So maybe it's not of importance to them but to me it is especially as an ethnic person, it would be important to us. Learning about my culture, especially what we*

> *contributed to this world to make it how it is today. You know Gandhi, peace, non-violence, and India is independent. So to me that would be important and I would have liked to go into depth about it...I think my classmates could learn from this too; I don't want you to think that I'm trying to make things my way or something.*

For Sapna, learning about the worldly contributions of her culture was positive for her. MR2 reported *"feeling good"* learning about contributions by the Chinese. He stated:

> *MR2: In social studies class, we talked about some guy in China who did something good, I can't remember what it was but like it makes you feel China did this good. But like we hardly ever learn anything good about the Chinese culture, or other cultures. Mostly it's just like on the Europeans and stuff.*

Faith was critical of teachers when it came to dealing with issues of "race" and culture in Canada. She conveyed that *"teachers don't go into any great depth about race and culture because they themselves do not understand the area very well."* This was extremely problematic for her and she found teachers' inability to engage in the praxis of "race" relations a hindrance.

> *FAITH: In my opinion, teachers need to learn about history and they should know about cultures and how cultures have come about in Canada. It limits students when a teacher really can't discuss race and culture but yet we're reading about it. Why read about it if we can't touch on it with someone that has had experience, someone that can give us input, give us insight, help us to understand. Why do we read and touch on it with a teacher that doesn't understand herself or himself, and expect them to teach us. For me, it does more damage than help me because it's like I don't get the answers I want, or any real understanding, you know what I mean?*

Phylicia discussed her *"brief"* lesson on slavery. The following quote is based on the totality of her understanding of slavery as it was taught to her.

> *PHYLICIA: I remember when we learned about slavery it was really brief and quick. We learned about both the positive and negative sides of slavery, it wasn't just one aspect being singled out. I did get a negative sense inside of how Blacks were treated and who treated them that way, the whites, and I did feel pity and sadness for the way the Blacks were treated. But then when they talk about the positives, you hear how they're all living together and happy, then you have a positive sense inside, it*

> *makes you feel good....The positive for me was knowing that eventually slavery was abolished, that was the positive out of all this, but it makes me realize how white people basically saw us as nothing because of the way they treated us. Funny thing just occurred to me. How different are things today, you know?*

In Social Studies, the students revealed that the content they learned is generally about "*World War 1, WW2, Post-war events, Hitler, and economics from Europe's perspective.*" David believed that it is important to learn about Germany, Hitler, and the world wars but felt that learning about India was not important given his perception that India did not have a major war.

> *DAVID: In Social Studies, you don't learn about India. Today, we should learn about stuff if it has meaning today. Like we should learn about Hitler Germany and the wars but India didn't have a major war so we don't need to learn about it.*

David, who is an East Indian, was born in London England and immigrated to Canada at the age of 11. His views reflect a certain privileging of the "West" over his ethnocultural heritage and roots. According to Sapna, this is known as being "white-washed" a term typical among her peers.

> *SAPNA: When we say that someone's white-washed, what that means is you're totally white, you don't act like your culture even if say, you know like how in schools if someone of the same race is talking to someone else and they might say a swear word in their own language. But the white wash kids that do not want to connect with their own culture, they would not say anything. They would act like I don't know what this means, or I don't know I'm all white I don't do this, I don't do that, I don't go to temples because I'm pure Canadian. People act this way because maybe people think they have a better chance of fitting in with the Canadian lifestyle when they drop their own culture and follow the pure Canadian lifestyle. Maybe it's an easier way for them to fit in with their surroundings and with the white people. I think lots of people are actually embarrassed about their culture. Some of my friends, like I have a whole bunch of different race friends, but with some of my Brown race friends, if they're at a white party and a cousin or aunt comes up to them, I've noticed this right, and they're wearing a sari or something, and they start talking to them in their own language, they'll be looking around hoping no one will notice because they're embarrassed, and they'll be giving the person the hint that oh I don't want to talk to you just get lost kind of thing.*

Sapna and I then went on to discuss non-white students' comfort level with their "race" and culture at school?

> *SAPNA: You know how we were talking about* mendh[16] *last time, you see so many kids in school wearing that, and Indian bangles and things like that. You see so many kids, like even the white kids right, their wearing the bangles and the* tikka[17] *so I've seen quite a bit of people that have been wearing them. So I guess what I'm saying here is that when white kids do it then the Brown kids would begin to feel more confident that people wouldn't make fun of them and then they would start to do it. But like if the Brown kids did it first, most people won't do it and the Brown kids will get bugged. But like when the white people do it, like the more popular ones or something it's okay for them to do it and people won't make fun of them. Then the Brown kids or other ethnic group kids would begin to do it too then.*

A few of the students mentioned how they were given an opportunity to go to only Europe for 12 days as part of their Social Studies class *"to see how other cultures function other than Canada."* They were not given any other countries around the world to go to see how other cultures function. As Peter stated *"that was it. We were only given the option to go to Europe. We just had a tour, 4 days in London, 3 days in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam."* I asked Rose if she went to the trip to Europe offered to Social Studies 30 students? She abruptly exclaimed *"what trip! I wasn't even asked!"* I then began to explain to her that students were asked to go to a trip to Europe at these places. I asked her to explain to me why she thinks Europe was chosen?

> *ROSE: Probably because of technology and stuff. Like you wouldn't go to a country where there's no washroom, no water, and whatever. But there, it's kind of like here, with like language and stuff, and the history of it, cause like Canada is connected to Britain and all that so.*

---

[16] It is referred to as henna in West. Mendhi stems from an ancient Eastern marriage tradition.

[17] This is a small red dot married (Hindu) women wear on their forehead between the eyes. It is an ancient custom among Indians.

This view of Non-Western regions as being technologically and socially backwards was a very typical perception among the remainder of the students. For example, Mike believed that Westernization and its associated cultural characteristics exist only in *"...North America, England, France, Europe mostly, and Australia...."*

Peter was the only student to articulate the perception of the West as superior with the legacy of colonialism.

> *PETER: Some people believe they are better than others. Actually the West feels more superior to the East...They have been dominating since colonial times. Its mostly Western Europe and the United States, but not Canada. These two countries (regions) are still pretty influential in the world.*

Another student Rodney, focussed on the negative perceptions he has of Other countries as presented to him in the curriculum.

> *RODNEY: They do teach us about other cultures and stuff like that, and how other people live and what their problems are and there always seems to be problems with people in general over there. You always learn about the civil wars and political conflicts and stuff like that. There's always conflict and wars between different cultures, or races, or countries, or whatever. Like in Israel [for example] between the Palestines and Israels. The Jews claimed a land for themselves but like the Palestines were already there so that's been the constant battle back and forth throughout the years and I find that very negative....You do learn some positive stuff about other cultures I guess, but for me, I always seem to remember the negative. It just seems like all these countries in the world just have so many problems and I find that negative. Why can't they just run their country properly. Look at us, we don't have problems like them.*

"RACE" RELATIONS IN SCHOOL

In the survey and the interviews, the students provided interesting views on the subject of "race relations" in their school. A number of specific areas and issues were identified as significant, including peer relations, racism, joking, and fights.

i) Peer Relations

As previously stated in Chapter I, this is not a study on the school itself. Based on the students' responses in the interviews, this was a school in which *"everybody accepted and respected diversity"* within the school. When comparing their school to other schools, the students believed that there was no real "racial" tension or threat of "racial" hostility within their school. In Phylicia's view this was due to the school's *"academic environment"* and *"strict teacher control."*

In reporting some of my first hand observations, I observed that the non-white students (typically of the same "race") sat together, and the white students sat together in the classroom. Despite this "racial" clustering, all of the students generally cooperated and worked well together when facilitated by the teachers. For example, during my visits in the classrooms prior to interviewing, the students had read a short story called "Happy Event" and were asked to work on specific questions in groups assigned by their teacher. During my formal and informal interactions with all of the various groups, I observed that the non-white students tended to be less vocal than their white peers. I also noticed that when a non-white student would vocalize their response, the students in the group were not actively responding as readily as they did when it was their white peers' response, and their input was quite often dismissed. For example, Phylicia's group was asked to outline key themes of the short story. All of the white students' responses were written down by the recorder and were not interrogated by the other students in the group. However, when Phylicia presented her thematic perception, all of the students in the group questioned the validity of her response. After explaining its relevance, the students dismissed her response entirely.

Outside of the classroom, I observed significant "racial" division. The white students predominately hung out with other white students, and all of the various Non-white students mixed with one another. Similarly, there was some division based on different cliques, such as jocks, drama, or band, as pointed out to me by Carrie, but the majority of what I observed outside of these social cliques was "racially" based. In addition to white cliques, and various non-white cliques, I particularly noticed a specific group of Asian students who always congregated together during the lunch hour by some lockers. I was informed by Rose that they are recent immigrants who have an English language barrier and are consequently treated negatively by other students because of this.

> *ROSE: Those Orientals [by the lockers] hang out together because their new immigrants and can get along because they can't speak English very well. I've heard some people say that "oh their dumb who would want to talk to them look at the way they dress, we have nothing in*

> *common." But I think if they really sat down and talked to each other then maybe they could get along. But no one does that really because we're older and it sounds stupid to most people.*

Question number 20 in the survey asked "Of what ethnocultural background are your close friends at school from?" It was found that the majority of "Canadian" students had white friends. The following are the white students' responses to question number 20 in the questionnaire.

> *#2:* *All of my close friends at school are Canadian, although a few would probably say Ukrainian-Canadian.*
>
> *#6:* *Canadian, they do not choose to define themselves as anything else.*
>
> *#12:* *I'm not sure. Some German, British, maybe. Most of us are amalgamations.*
>
> *#14:* *Polish, German, Scottish, French, blah blah blah. The one that we all are is Canadian.*
>
> *#3:* *Most of them are Ukrainian or English because it seems that at school, people get into their own groups.*
>
> *#20:* *Most of my friends are mostly Canadian and of the same skin colour (ie Ukrainian, German, Swedish, Irish).*
>
> *#29:* *Canadian, Chinese, German, English, Scottish, Irish, Native, Yugoslavian. My friends backgrounds are diverse. Race is not an issue when I meet someone.*

In contrast, the non-white students had more Non-European and Non-Canadian friends.

> *#32:* *I'm not really sure. We don't discuss backgrounds or nationalities. Some are Brown, Black, White, Chinese, and that's all I know of them. I don't know where they are from. That is their outward appearances.*
>
> *#37:* *Most of my close friends are South Indian, Punjabi, Portuguese, Oriental (Chinese, Vietnamese), Muslims, and some Canadians.*

> #35: *Vietnamese-Fukein (Chinese province), Vietnamese-Chinese, Cambodian-Vietnamese, Indo-Malaysian, Jamaican, Chinese, English-Scottish-Irish, and Aboriginal.*
>
> #34: *Oriental and White.*
>
> #41: *Some Canadians, Germans, and Orientals basically because I got to know them from my classes.*

During the course of the interviews, the students confirmed the observations I had made outside of the classroom when I shared them with them for accuracy.

> *SAPNA: It is even this year where the whites hang out and then the non-whites hangout. My close friends at this school are Brown. I have seen it, there is segregation to some extent where you have the same race, same colour hangout together...But we don't have any major racial conflict at our school. Basically if you leave people alone they'll leave you alone.*

Based on their own reasoning, the students explained why people of the same cultural/"racial" groups hang out together. For MR2, although he is comfortable with both his white and Oriental friends, he would prefer to hang out with his Chinese friends primarily because they are able to speak Chinese, which is a language he would like to maintain.

> *MR2: Like the same races hang together because they feel more comfortable talking the way they do. Say with me and my friends we speak Chinese. We feel more comfortable speaking Chinese especially if it pertains to a specific situation or something. It's just more appropriate to say that in Chinese than saying it in English. Not that we can't speak it, it's just that it's our culture, that's what our language is; it's just more appropriate to use the Chinese words for some things instead of the English words. With some Black people they talk different English, slang. To me it feels more comfortable when I'm with people who speak the same language as I do. I don't feel uncomfortable with other people but I would rather speak Chinese. My Chinese is pretty bad right now so it's nice to be with people who speak Chinese. For myself I want to speak more Chinese so I don't loose how the way to speak it. Like I won't stumble, and when I don't know a word I don't want to use the English word for what's suppose to be the Chinese word. [Plus] you have similar attitudes and same ideas of things. Like for example, the way I see it white people prefer trucks [whereas] more teenage Orientals [like myself] drive sports cars so in that way we have similar ideas and interests.*

For Sapna, she hangs out with people of the same cultural background as her because of the shared cultural values and practices. Because of this commonality there is a marked understanding and acceptance. Based on her own experiences, she found that those in the norm were judgmental towards her beliefs. From this, she learned about her identity in terms of what she is not, white, and found that hanging out with those that have similar values as her nurtures and lends support to the positive development of her identity and self-worth.

> *SAPNA: You know how people are friends with people that have similar interests right, well school is like this. I'm just going to use the Brown people as an example because I'm Brown and understand what we think. Most people they don't go out (date) and things like that in the Brown culture, but some do it anyways. But even though they do it they understand if their friend does not go out and things, they understand. So it's easier for them to talk to someone who's living, experiencing, who knows what the culture is about. If I were to go to a white person and say "oh I'm not allowed to do this because it's not in my culture." The white person could easily say "oh that's a fucked up culture. You should convert because if you don't experiment at this time in your life when will you." It's so easy for them to say that because that's how they think. But when you're talking to a Brown person they understand that this is not right in our culture. It is not accepted. We would be shunned if we did something like this. So even though some Brown people date because of peer pressure, or they just wanna fit in or whatever, they understand what the other Brown person is going through, so it's easier to have that common ground. I find that I don't have to explain myself or why I am the way I am. I know they understand and I'm not looked at as some freak by them like most white people do.*

Sapna's explanation regarding a lack of acceptance and understanding by the white majority was exemplified in my interview with Faith as she discussed the unimportance for her to maintain her ethnocultural values. She stated:

> FAITH: *I maintain my values sometimes if it is on certain traditional days. I'll go to the United Church with my Grandmother and Mom. However, I maintain my values in my own way by not over doing it.*

She felt that some people in Canada *"over do it."* Faith explained what *"over doing it"* meant in relation to her own culture/way of life.

> *FAITH: To me its like someone who goes to church every Sunday, prays every morning, prays before they eat anything, pray before they go*

> *to bed. For me, as long as I know that there's someone up there and I believe in that, that is all that really matters to me, not all this obsessive stuff. Like as long as I know where I come from and the beliefs my family has that's all that really matters. Like I look at people, like my very very very good Muslim friend for example. She can't eat I believe pork I don't know I'm not sure, and she fasts and stuff like that. And her parents, won't let her do anything. Like when I go pick her up, the white guys have to lie down in the back seat because her parents are so* (long pause), *you know what I mean. In my opinion, the way I see it is because of the way we are in Canada everyone is "suppose" to be open-minded. That in my opinion is over doing it. Their religious or their beliefs and morals come so into play that it effects what your children do now that they live in Canada. You know what I mean. Like what you did in the country that you came from or were born in and what people do now in Canada it's just too restrictive. Like this is Canada not where you are from....Like I don't have a problem with fasting and stuff, that's something they believe in , that's just like a religious aspect. But like her father doesn't want her to marry a white guy, for him that may be what he wants but he's not back home. I see the religious aspect of that religion and the morals coming through and I don't think that, in my opinion they are the right morals.*

This lack of acceptance and understanding and a push for immigrants to become "Canadian" by some white students was an important factor for some non-white students when selecting their core peer groups. This was problematic for Rodney as he did not like it when people of the same "race" or religion hang around together.

> *RODNEY: ...It bothers me when I see people of the same colour, or the same religion or race or whatever, hang out together, that's when I think racist thoughts. I don't like that. I just don't like it when their friends are people that are the same as them. When I see them, I think how I seriously wish they would just go back to their own country.*

Yet Rodney finds it acceptable for him to have friends who are of the same "race" and background as him.

> *RODNEY: All of my friends were born in Canada, so their Canadian, like their all white....Well most of your friends are like you are, I'm not saying skin colour or nothing, but the way their families are, the way they run their lives are usually the same and that's the people you wanna be around. You are usually around the people most like you I find. You don't really like the people that are different from you.*

ii) Racism

In the previous chapter, all of the non-white students discussed experiencing racism within society. It was found that they were not exempted from it in school their school environment. It is important to mention that none of the students in this particular sample experienced overt racism in high school but were aware of its existence based on past school experiences as well as their observations of other students' experiences.

MR2 spoke about how the majority of racism he has heard is usually related to students making racist comments about other cultures particularly when learning about them in class. He gave an example of how some students react when discussing other cultural groups in a classroom setting.

> *MR2: When you talk about other cultures and stuff like in English or Social, people usually laugh at other cultures. If there's someone in the class from that culture that you're studying, you would like to ask if they can elaborate on it because the teacher usually doesn't know much about that culture. But because people make fun of other cultures you don't want to ask, or be asked if it's your culture....Like when we study about dark skinned or Black people, they're kind of mean about their appearance and stuff, like what, how they look. They won't make fun of them when they're there or in class or anything but do it out of class when they're not there.*
>
> *TKC: Who are "they"?*
>
> *MR2: White people. At least that's what I have seen.*

Similarly, Sapna reported not feeling comfortable during class discussions centering around the issues of multiculturalism.

> *SAPNA: One time in Social Studies this year, this girl was saying how she doesn't like it when she walks into Redimart and how the owners play Hindi music. She feels the atmosphere is Redimart, not Indian. She was saying it's not like an Indian store where the Hindi music would be acceptable, it's Redimart. Personally I didn't pay much attention to it because you know everyone's entitled to their opinions. But it's their store and they obviously want to play Hindi music so go ahead, it doesn't matter. She doesn't have to go there she can go to some other store if it bothers her that much.*
>
> *TKC: Did you express your opinion to her in class during the discussion?*

> *SAPNA: See, that's what I mean, I wouldn't feel confident saying that in class. I don't talk very often in class. But I feel it's okay for me to talk to you about this. But if I was in class, I don't think that I would feel that confident but if someone directed the comment at me and they started pointing fingers at me and saying oh you Pakis do this, then I would for sure feel confident to tell them to fuck off because you don't have to go there, go to 7-11 or something.*

Sapna then went on to discuss how she chooses to remain silent unless a question is directed at her based on her previous classroom encounters.

> *SAPNA: Because what ends up happening is like I'm the only Brown person there, and then you know how some people they feel they are better. From what I've seen most white people their judgements and opinions tend to be so similar. I don't like to have 30 other people against one person while I'm the only Brown person and then I'm arguing against 30 other people who have the same view because I won't be able to get my point across. So it would be a back and forth kind of thing. You know because if you have 30 other people bitching about your culture and everything and you're sitting there trying to defend it, you just know you're not going to get anywhere with these people.*

Racist comments are not typically overtly expressed to the intended individual(s) in the classroom in the presence of teachers. However, racist thoughts are overtly shared within the parameters of close friends.

> *MR2: Some people make fun of other people just because they don't like them, different culture, race, whatever. But they'll never say anything when a teacher's there because they don't want to get into trouble, and reveal [to the teacher] how they are, like what they think. [But] some still do say stuff to people's face if they want to be heard or something. [But] most won't say something directly to the person's face because they don't want to start a fight. But you'd say it around people that you know. You wouldn't say it around people you don't know, because maybe they'll tell on you or something.*

When I asked MR2 "why would people want to tell their friends? Don't they care what their friends think of them?" MR2 said that

> *MR2: Well your friends wouldn't betray you and tell what you said about someone else right. And like if they're racist then their friends*

> *are just as racist probably if they talk about it and make fun. But I know most people think it but just don't say anything.*

MR2 attributes a decrease in overt racism at school to society's *"so-called"* ideology of *"equality."*

> *MR2: People don't want to be considered a racist, or have people think of them as being stupid because like we're in the 90s where everything's suppose to be "equal" and whatever. So say someone's being racist and stuff at school and they think they're better than other cultures and stuff. Other people might think it's dumb, because we're in the 90s, and they (the racist) know it so they won't say anything but they still think it. They just won't speak out because they don't want people to have a negative view of them, especially at school with friends and teachers too....Plus you get into more problems at school when stuff like this happens, not only from the administrators and stuff but like also, you're school work gets affected.*

The majority of students reported that the students that usually make the racist comments are almost always *"white."* As Rose said *"I've only heard the white students say really ignorant racist remarks about people."* Peter too said that *"Caucasians"* were the racist ones. He believed it stemmed from colonization.

> *PETER: I'd say the Caucasian people, like European background that are racist. It's just you have that superiority complex going, like with all the wars and even colonization so its like they have that thought in their mind that we're better than everyone.*

iii) Joking

According to some of the students, joking about different "races" is openly done. I asked the students to explain to me when a students(s) makes a comment about other "races," when is it a joke and when isn't it? MR2 gave an example of how an individual can convey his/her racist thoughts by employing the joking method/model. He referred back to his example of learning about Black or dark-skinned people in class.

> *MR2: A joke would be like saying something about their hair or something, like the texture of it but in a better way than oh look at his funny hair kind of thing. You know something not so harsh so that people don't think you're being racist. But often you won't hear it in front of a Black person.*

Faith relayed another type of joking method and explained the appropriateness of joking with friends as opposed to individuals you are not familiar with.

> *FAITH: ...I have a really big butt I think and my mom told me that I have a Bootie butt, and I'm like what's that? She said you have a Black woman's butt. I'm like Mom! If you look at [Black women] a lot of them , and a lot of them are beautiful, but their larger in that area, the majority that go here anyway. And you hear that a lot of the time, a lot of people use that word around here. I can say that around the two good Black friends that I have but I could never say that around people that I don't know that are of that colour you know? I think it has to do with the closeness. I could never say something like that in Social class and feel good about it, but when I'm sitting around and joking with my girls I'm like hey ya guys look at my big butt it's almost as big as yours. And that's a joke and they know it's a joke. When you're comfortable with people then you can joke about specific things related to their culture or whatever. But when you don't know them and they start saying things about your culture or whatever, then you don't take it as a joke.*

This was reiterated by Sapna, who said that it was acceptable for her friends to joke with her as opposed to those individuals that were not her friends.

> *SAPNA: For example, you know how India was doing the nuclear test things for a couple of weeks. I was reading the newspaper and people would be like do you know these people, because they were Brown people. We were laughing.*
>
> *TKC: Who said that to you?*
>
> *SAPNA: This Oriental guy in my class, he's a good friend of mine, and we joke around with each other all the time so I didn't take offence to it because of how he said it. It was funny because you know how people think that if you're Brown then you must know all other Brown people, I'm sure you get that too.*

Sapna also pointed out the calibre of differences in the joking relationship between two non-white individuals, and the joking relationship between one non-white and white individuals.

> *SAPNA: Like say a Black person jokes about something to an Oriental person, they'll laugh, and then the Oriental'll say something about the Black person and they'll laugh. [But] some people do take it offensively when it comes from a white person rather than coming from another Brown person or an Oriental person. Like say a white person were to make a joke about an African or something, that African would*

> *take it offensively and could turn back and say oh you guys think you're so great and stuff and this can lead to things.*

"Tone" and *"language"* were two key components in assessing whether the joke stated was intended to be offensive or not?

> *MR2: ...well by the way they say it. If they don't seem very serious like say [for example] they don't say "oh dam them something." Something like that. But sometimes when those guys swear they are serious but just to save themselves from getting into a physical fight or having people think that their racist or something they'll say "I was just joking" or something like that.*

When a joke is made to an individual, ultimately, the recipient of the joke is the one who assesses whether the joke was meant to be offensive or not.

> *FAITH: I don't think the person that says the joke knows if it's a joke or not. Like I'm sure they must know. The person that's going to judge whether it's a joke or not is the person that is being told the joke....I think the person that the joke is being said about is the one to say whether or not it's a joke. They're going to take a step back and say hey what do you mean by that?*

vi) Fights

According to MR2, when some male students experience racism, they do not deal with the racism immediately in school but deal with it out of the school the boundaries, to keep it independent of their school routine. MR2 explained this further.

> *MR2: Say someone says or does something racist towards someone right. Some of them say like I'm not going to say anything now but I'm gonna get you back afterwards, or something like that. They won't say anything now but they are going to do something about it. Especially teenagers nowadays, they don't want people to think like your chicken and stuff like that you know. Just basically like act cool or whatever you wanna call it. They don't say anything to the person right away but they'll do something about it afterwards....Some people do fight the person right away in school if it gets to that but then they'll get expelled or whatever. But then like people that are actually smarter will do it outside of school. This becomes your personal thing not a in school thing.*

MR2, further explained why the *"smarter"* students do not want to deal with it at school.

> *MR2: If you reacted in school, people will know what you're doing, you'd get expelled and all that, in trouble basically. The school's going to call the cops if it's really serious like say you brought a knife to school or something like that. If you do it out of class, you don't have to bring any ID with you or anything like that. Say you're at a park had a car ready to go, you can hit someone and just run off, you wouldn't get in trouble, nothing can be proven basically.*

For MR2, because school is extremely valued and important to both his family and him, when he does experience racism at school he can not dismiss it. He chooses to *"deal with it out of school"* as he does not want to jeopardize his education, or his reputation at school among his peers and more importantly with his teachers *"due to someone else's ignorance."* He explained how he would address a racist remark.

> *MR2: Say someone says something racist to me and I got angry. I'd want to deal with it. I'd want to get them back but not right there and not right away because I just don't want to confront them at school because like you fall behind in school if your say suspended. Even though they said something to me, I'll end up looking like the bad one in front of your classmates and teachers for reacting, that's just how it goes, and I don't want that. [But] say I know where he lives or his phone number, I just call and bug him, or stuff like that.*

It was found that violence among girls is rapidly increasing. Unlike male violence which is typically rooted in racism, female violence according to these students is centered around boyfriends.

> *SAPNA: The girls are just like oh he's my guy and you can' t have him, when the ex is like I still want him back or whatever, things like that. Just fighting over a guy. With these girl fights I think they're so stupid like some of the reasons they fight over. Also like say their (two girls) boyfriends are fighting they feel that as their girlfriends, they should be fighting. They fight over the silliest things, and then at the end they find out it's all a misunderstanding. If they had sat down and talked about it, it wouldn't have happened but they just jumped to conclusions.*

Sapna also discussed how *"girl fights are further provoked by students encouraging the two people to fight just to watch a fight."* I asked Sapna if "other than being related to boys, are any of the girl fights related to "race", or racism?

> *SAPNA: I haven't heard of anything to do with race, it's mostly always about guys. I've heard more of like fights between guys that dealt with race, where like racism was a problem in those fights.*

MR2 revealed that girls also fight over personal comments made towards them.

> *MR2: Girls fight over girl comments like "oh that girl's so cheap." They'll say girl comments about each other and they don't like it, so they'll call a bunch of their friends and beat the girl up when she's alone.*

When the potential for conflict does surface for girls, unlike many males, girls will generally confront the situation immediately at school verbally which may or may not escalate into a physical confrontation depending on the people involved, and the purpose of the conflict. Some girls will physically retaliate outside of the school environment typically when the intended girl is alone.

PROMOTING INTER-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

In the surveys and interviews, the students expressed views and ideas related to the building of intercultural understanding in a school environment that is supportive of cultural diversity.

Generally, the survey findings revealed that a significant majority of the white students felt that schools provided a positive setting for understanding diversity. The following are some of their responses that were conveyed to question number 16 which asked "In your opinion, do schools provide a positive or negative setting for understanding cultural diversity?"

> *#2: I believe Canadians, especially younger generations, are very tolerant of other cultures because we've been educated about it and have grown up immersed in a diverse cultural society.*
>
> *#3: I think that schools provide a positive setting because they enroll everyone and allow interaction amongst people.*
>
> *#11: They try to make you realize everyone is equal.*
>
> *#12: They teach us to accept diversity and that multiculturalism is good.*

> #18: *They provide a positive setting because you are exposed to many different races at school from different cultural backgrounds.*

> #7: *Schools provide a chance to become slightly more familiar with other cultures through dealing with their people. For the most part though you are dealing with Canadians and are very limited in that way.*

> #33: *We are constantly encouraged to learn about other cultures and to co-operate with anyone no matter who it is.*

> #5: *I actually think it's in between. We learn about cultural diversity in social and anybody who's got the attention span to listen for that long and take it all in, that's great. For me I get kind of bored and phase out.*

In addition to the white students' belief that schools provide a positive setting for understanding cultural diversity, the majority of white students also felt schools are doing an adequate job of addressing diversity in their schools and that things are "fine" the way they are as indicated by their response to question number 17 in the questionnaire which asked . "Do you think that schools can foster a better understanding of cultural diversity?"

> #10: *I think we have to understand that we are Canadians and that should be our culture not a whole bunch of different beliefs just one.*

> #12: *No, it's pretty much good the way it is. In Social and English we are taught to think multiculturalism and diversity are good.*

> #14: *No. Actually they are concentrating too much at times on different cultures.*

> #21: *No, there is not enough time to have to learn about this stuff.*

> #17: *I think Alberta Education does a pretty good job in this area.*

> #26: *In schools we are not taught any difference between cultures. We are taught people are the same. Students hardly ever see skin colour or race when looking at a person.*

> #9: *Probably not much more than they already do. We learn about all different cultures in school and get to see and interact with all different cultures.*

For Mike and Rodney, they both felt that the schools did not focus enough on teaching about the Canadian culture.

> *RODNEY: I think we need to stop learning about everybody else and just focus on Canadian culture. What exactly are we? What makes us who we are? What makes us stick out? Make people want to be patriotic. Make people want to actually know our national anthem. Like I want the government to make sure that everyone knows the national anthem; like come on, that's sick, that's stupid, that's annoying.*

Some white students felt that there is room for improvement when it comes to learning about other cultures.

> #2: *I think schools could do a better job of educating about the belief system and values, as well as customs of other cultural groups. As of right now it is completely taboo to do so.*
>
> #29: *Yes cover a wider range of topics/different range of cultures in Social Studies, not just France, Europe. The English literature should include more world literature.*
>
> #4: *Yes I think that we can always learn more about each others differences which would in turn allow us to understand each other better. Perhaps in schools there could be as an option a course dedicated to learning only of other cultures.*
>
> #6: *There should be more opportunities, such as more classes dealing with not only other languages, but their beliefs and traditions of all different races.*
>
> #5: *Yes. This might sound corny, but to have different culture days would help. For example we had Japan day. It helped us to learn a lot about Japan, like what they ate, what school was like.*

According to the results of question number 18 in questionnaire which asked "Would you like to learn about other cultures? If so, what would you like to learn?" it was found that the majority of white students did want to learn about other cultures. The following lists what they would like to learn about.

#7: *A little bit, sure. Mostly, I'd like to learn about what they eat. But I'm not overly concerned about learning stuff about others.*

#9: *Some. Like Japanese people and how they live. What they believe, values and their way of life.*

#1: *Yes, I find other cultures interesting because they are new to me. I would like to learn some traditions and why they are followed, also how they do things.*

#5: *Yes. I would like to learn what other cultures eat and how the like to prepare their food (for example, we like the microwave!), what they do for fun (different age groups), and what kind of styles do they have.*

#8: *I am interested in learning about other cultures. Mostly on their way of life, and language.*

#6: *Yes. The political and economic systems of Germany and Sweden. Also, traditional holidays and history of Ireland.*

#4: *Yes! I take an interest in cultural foods and traditions, holidays, religions, and history.*

#15: *I would like to learn about customs, endured hardships, education and home life.*

#20: *Yes I would and I believe others should learn as well. Ignorance of others' cultures often results in racism. I would enjoy learning about the history and traditions of as many cultures as possible.*

#23: *Yes. I would like to learn how they live, their kinds of food, clothing, attitudes, buildings. Pretty much everything.*

For the non-white students, the majority in the survey felt that schools do *"try"* to provide a positive setting for understanding cultural diversity. The survey results are as follows.

#35: *There is investigation of diverse cultures. But most teachers fail to set stereotypes straight.*

> #37: *...I have had classes in Social 30 where we have had discussions about different cultures. I find they lack depth; we just skim over stuff.*

> #39: *Well schools provide a positive setting for the amount of information that we do get. We never really go into detail about cultures, so we only know the basics, nothing really significant though.*

> #41: *I think schools do try to provide a positive setting for understanding cultural diversity, but only a little. I think that they could do way more.*

In addition to this, the non-white students felt that there was room for improvement.

> #33: *I think schools could teach more about different cultures in Canada, like their traditions and values.*

> #35: *I think it would be great if schools would explain why people do have certain customs rather than just saying them. Also it would be a good opportunity to prevent prejudice.*

> #32: *The schools can teach more about the smaller places like Jamaica, the Caribbean, Hawaii, and other places like that instead of always England, Germany, U.S.A. and places like that.*

> #38: *I've come to learn that everything can't just be taught from books and lectures at school here. It's the "outside" world which can help us to understand society cause I don't think that schools really know how to actually.*

> #41: *I think the school could add a unit on something about cultural diversity to the Social courses.*

With regards to question number 18 which asked, "Would you like to learn about other cultures?" the following are some of the non-white students' responses.

> #32: *It would be nice to learn about other cultures. I would liked to have learned a bit more about my background, instead of just from my parents.*

> #31: *I would like to learn about why certain cultures celebrate certain occasions.*

> *#35: For me, I would like to learn more about the people and how they live their lives and then branch out from there.*
>
> *#33: If we could learn about other cultures in school, I would want to learn about the traditions and values of other cultures.*
>
> *#37: I would like to learn about other cultures. I would be interested in learning about the African culture. How their religion was created, what different tribes there are and if they actually practised black magic and how it was started.*
>
> *#38: I'd like to learn about other customs, history, and the type of social environment they have.*
>
> *#41: I think it would be really interesting to learn about what other people believe in, and how they lead their life because of that cultural belief.*

Despite the degrees of differences in responses between what the white and non-white students would like to learn about, the overall findings indicate that some students would like to engage in the learning about other cultures. for Faith, when encountering something "different" she would like to question the person(s) first hand but finds it problematic.

> *FAITH: If I didn't know my Muslim friend as well as I did I wouldn't say why do you dress up to cover yourselves, why do you do that because I would feel like it's not my business. Like I want to know but how can you just walk up to someone and ask them. They'd be like whoa why are you asking me. I don't think they sit back and think well okay maybe she wants to learn.*
>
> *TKC: Why don't you think that they would think that you want to learn?*
>
> *FAITH: I don't know, maybe because of how whites have treated them in the past. Like maybe they think that you're questioning them in a bad way like why are you wearing that?, rather than seriously wanting to understand why. I'm sure they deal with it a lot here like people looking at them like there's something wrong with them and I think that it would put them on the defence. I know I would be like 'what are you looking at' kind of thing.*

With the exception of Rodney, Mike, and Carrie, the remainder of the students felt that ignorance should no longer prevail. As Peter framed it

> *PETER: I don't think we should let ignorance about other cultural groups continue because ignorance is the biggest problem in society. If you ignore a problem it won't go away. If you deal with it you'll understand more about it. I think that understanding will be better for people, I think they will become more accepting to others as they'll have more understanding.*

Phylicia also felt that it is important to eliminate ignorance, particularly for those who are racist and for the future generations.

> *PHYLICIA: I think that we should try to do something to inform people. Even the young ones in school; like we should teach them from the very beginning because pretty soon their going to be older, and going to be part of the larger society and they should learn about other cultures as society won't be ignorant to some degree...[Also] I think it would help a lot of other people who are racist because they're racist because they don't know any better, they don't know anything about the different cultures.*

Faith stressed the need to critically examine differences and the historical treatment of non-whites by whites.

> *FAITH: It's important to discuss societal changes, the differences that go on in society, but we don't discuss it in school. We all know there's ethnic differences but we don't talk about it. Why? Why don't we talk about it? We should emphasize how we treated coloured people; show the immorality some white people had. That's what I think we should focus on in history. We talk about how it was done, not how it is being done today.*

Faith felt that change will emerge only if individuals are willing to look within themselves.

> *FAITH: There's always something you can do but I believe that it starts with the self. You have to be a person that can say ya I love her, I like him; he has ugly hair but I still like him. It has to be within yourself. If you've always been judgemental inside, I think racism and ignorance will still be there whether there is a policy or not, it'll still go on. To me, it's up to the individual to set things straight. But I do believe that in the long run when people do start accepting the fact that we are the way we are and this is the way that society is, I think that it will come eventually. I think that we have to start to educate people to accept the fact that everyone is equal. No one person is better because they're Black, White, smart or dumb.*

While acknowledging the helpful role of historical understanding, Phylicia felt that teaching about current events and problems should also be emphasized.

> *PHYLICIA: I'd much rather learn about things that are happening around the world today rather than names and dates of the past. To a degree we need to, and should learn about things that happened in the past because all of that effects who and how we are today, and we can change things so they're better for today and for the future. But not so much about the past like dates and stuff because there's only so much you can learn and then it's just repetition and becomes pointless. We can use history as the base but then we need to focus on the present and what's happening now in the world because we're in the here and now.*

Peter felt that talking to people would be very beneficial. He said

> PETER: *Basically if you talk to people, let them get to know you, they'll see that there really is no major difference between you. So basically talking and letting them get to know you is how I see it.*

MR2 felt that teachers and textbooks need to be more detailed in their explanations.

> *MR2: Textbook doesn't tell us details. It should have more information on why certain things happened, like why people did what they did. Teachers are just like oh they did this and we did that back, they don't give us the reason and explain why, they just kind of mention it and the you wonder why and how certain things happened, you want to know the reason behind it. I think they should teach all of that and give us details so we understand properly. We should be taught in social class about other cultures and talk about the racism and ignorance so we can deal with it educationally. Students should see how others view things and not think otherwise of some other race because their different. But I just find that teachers don't go into details and explain things very well, they just quickly mention it and move on to the next thing.*

Perhaps another solution to creating a step towards peaceful relations is dialogue. At the conclusion of my last interview with Mike, unexpectedly he had voluntarily shared with me how he felt about having participated in this research study.

> *MIKE: ...I felt that the questions you asked me were really good because they made think about a lot of things that I never really thought about before. I found myself even thinking about them even outside of the interviews with you. I never really think about other races and how I feel towards them. When I see someone that isn't white I do have all these negative thoughts. I guess I shouldn't get so mad when people talk with an*

> *accent because at least they're trying to speak our language. I don't know how to explain it; you just really made me think about a lot of things. I think I should try to understand other people more and look at things from their perspective. I guess what I'm trying to tell you is that I realized that I'm ignorant and don't know too much and ya, I've been mean to a lot of people. I'm not saying that I've thought everything out in my head and everything's totally clear but like you made me think about a lot of things and I'm a lot more conscious of myself and my views and how I treat people that aren't like myself, like us white Canadians.*

During my discussion with Rose regarding Vietnam, it was found that her perception of it was extremely negative. In our discussion I drew on Kelly's (1978) analysis of colonial education in Vietnam to indicate how French colonial policies had used education as a tool to keep Vietnam technologically backward. I can not capture in text the look in Rose's eyes and the expression on her face as I clarified this historical occurrence in Vietnam. She seemed hurt, saddened and shocked. In a saddened tone she said

> *ROSE: I don't really like it because we could have been a stronger country, and it isn't; it's poverty stricken. I think it was really wrong for them to do that just for slaves and resources. See in that way, they saw us Vietnamese people as lower. Less important, like we were not human. We don't ever learn about this in school. I know we would never because it's hidden right. It was something that was negative that happened, that the white people did, that's why. White people don't really want negative thoughts towards them; they want everything to look like this is the way other cultures are, like undeveloped, traditional and all that, and we are the better race and all that. Maybe the French people wanted it hidden because they didn't want to be thought of as these people who were animals who took away Vietnam's sophistication and way of life.*

Sapna's recommendation for creating peace and understanding is *"everybody should dress up in their traditional costumes and bring their ethnic food to school one day in the school year."* I then asked her, "what does that teach about what that culture values?"

> *SAPNA: Well it doesn't but like still you know everybody can see what you're wearing, it's still better than nothing. When I was in grade 9, during our talent show, there was 4 or 5 girls, we did a dance thing in front of the whole school but it was in our* langay[18]. *Lots of people*

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[18] Two piece East Indian garment. The top is a shirt that comes to the waist line and a long skirt to the ankles is also worn

> *complimented us on it. The teachers and students thought our outfits were cool. Lots of people took pictures.*

Based on Sapna's past experiences, she essentially applied the same solutions which have been modelled/conveyed to her as "appropriate," "acceptable" hence non-radical to the systemic school order.

TEACHERS

Overall, all of the students generally respected their teachers and felt that the respect was returned. However, the non-white students believed that they were prejudged and stereotyped by some of their teachers on the basis of their "race" and consequently given a secondary status in the eyes of those particular teachers. Rose was very perceptive to her surroundings and felt uneasy at school with some of her teachers as a direct result of the stigma they attached to her because she is an Oriental.

> *ROSE: I don't feel comfortable at school all the time because there is this sense of racial views at school by everyone, like the students and even some teachers. And I don't feel I'm as good as the white people in my school. I know at some schools they define Oriental people as being in ESL even though some are. It's different when you're in a normal class like 30. Sometimes I don't feel like teachers expect as much from you as they do other people because the might feel like that you don't understand and they'll want to keep helping you like you're stupid or something because you're Oriental. I don't have an accent like other [Oriental] people do and they may be a wiz at English but they just can't speak it but they write really good. This makes me feel bad because you're not treated on an equal level as everyone else even though I have the same capability as everyone else. I had an English class before and I was the only Oriental...and non-white person in the class. No one really spoke to me or asked me any questions during discussions. I just sat there the whole term. The teacher never once picked me to answer questions even when I would put my hand up....Teachers are suppose to put their differences aside, and they do try even if they think they are better because their white, but then at times, you totally do notice what they think.*

Rose was very aware of the secondary treatment she and other non-white students received from white teachers in comparison to her white peers. Sapna also discussed how *"teachers are very biased towards their own white way when they talk about other cultures."* She stated:

> *SAPNA:* *...You know how some white teachers they hold such biased opinions about other cultures. It's just some of the comments that they make and then they don't go into detail.*
>
> *TKC:* *Can you give me an example of what you're talking about? Like what kind of comments?*
>
> *SAPNA:* *I can't think of an example at the moment but like if someone is talking about something that's related to what we're talking about in class, they'll (teacher) just make a general comment like oh this culture is stupid because they have something like this, and then they'll just leave it at that*
>
> *TKC:* *Does the teacher use the term "stupid?"*
>
> *SAPNA:* *Not stupid but like you know they'll use some other big word or statement; but you're left with the impression that it's stupid. Even their facial expressions. You know, actions do speak louder than words. Say people are standing there talking about something that's relevant to their culture or something and their (teacher) listening. Even their facial expressions show that they don't agree, or are like disgusted or something. It seems like they want to have input in it but they don't want to say something that they know will be rude so they'll just keep their mouth shut but their holding it inside even though they want to say something. I think teachers should be a little bit more open to other ideas. Everyone has their prejudices I guess but it would be more appropriate for them I think, being teachers and all, to not make comments or facial expressions that would give students an idea of what their thinking because teachers are suppose to be neutral and professional. You know, like not favouring one way over another kind of thing.*

Just as Rose previously reported how she was ignored in her English class by both her classmates and teacher, Sapna was also aware of this ignoring treatment by white teachers. However, she felt based on her own observations that some teachers consciously selected non-white students when it came to answering the difficult questions.

> *SAPNA:* *I also noticed in some classes, some of the teachers they tend to choose the ethnic kids less for answers or questions. I have sat in class many times and watched, especially during class discussions how teachers tend to ask the white students more than they do the ethnic students, including me. And like when the hard question would come up, then they would ask the ethnic kid, and say the ethnic kid got it wrong, the*

> *teacher stands there and explains it to the (ethnic) kid in front of the whole class. I'm sure there were others in the class who didn't get the answer. This ends up making it look like the ethnic kid is stupid or something. This is just a personal observation of mine.*

MR2 shared an example of how a white classmate kept talking to him in class, but the teacher sent him (MR2) to the office.

> *MR2: In my Math class, I knew this white guy that sat in front of me. He would always turn around to talk to me while the teacher was explaining stuff. This one time in class, the teacher warned me to stop talking but said nothing to the white student, and he was the one that was turned around not facing the front. Then all of a sudden she's like go to the Principals office. I honestly didn't know what to say to her because like he was the one that always turned around to talk to me, I didn't ask him to; he was bugging me actually by turning around because I was trying to understand the lesson. I went to the Principal's office and didn't say anything because like she was a teacher and I didn't want to get into deeper trouble. I felt very discriminated upon and I don't understand why she sent me. I felt like she believed that us non-white kids are the trouble makers and the white students can do no wrong.*

I had asked Carrie and the other white students the following: "have you ever experienced racism in school? This question emerged out of my interviews with the non-white students as I wanted to compare the responses. She said *"yes."*

> *CARRIE: Yes. My...white...grade 6 teacher was racist towards my friend who was First Nations; Blackfoot or Cree, I can't remember. She gave her a really hard time and lower marks. We would hand in the same papers, and assignment you know, and she would get a lower mark. When she'd ask for help the teacher either ignored her or gave her a quick answer.*
>
> *TKC: So it wasn't actually towards you then.*

In an abrupt and defensive tone she said *"No. No it wasn't. But I've seen it."* Carrie's experience hence parallels some of the non-white students' perceptions in the classroom. Although Peter did not consistently feel marginalized by his teachers, he did share his experience with racism during his Social Studies class. Peter, who is a white immigrant from Yugoslavia, was overtly discriminated by his teacher because he had responded incorrectly to a question.

> *PETER: Basically I was in grade 10. I answered the question wrong and she goes "Oh Hello, you're in Canada now" in a very sarcastic tone, and I was like "what was that for?" I didn't think any teacher would respond like that. Other people in the class thought it was racial basically. They wanted me to go to the Principal and complain. I didn't want to. I wanted to talk to some people who knew the teacher. I didn't want to basically get anyone in trouble for something that they maybe said as a joke, but I didn't confront the teacher about it.*
>
> *TKC: Joke or not, how did you feel when she said that to you?*
>
> *PETER: Well I felt insulted. Kind of angry basically. I basically lost respect for that teacher because of that. And it didn't just happen that one time actually, it happened once again after that.*

In addition to experiencing and feeling that some teachers were biased, most of the students also felt that teachers were not equipped to handle issues of racism. As Phylicia stated

> PHYLICIA: *Teachers don't do anything about racism when it happens. Usually, like in junior high, my teachers would just say oh go sit down, but they wouldn't really handle it. And like in high school, it's the same thing. Of course students don't really say stuff in front of teachers because they don't want to get in trouble, but like there's been times where I've heard students make racist comments and if I heard them from where I was standing, I'm sure that the teacher that was nearer to them heard it too but didn't do anything about it. To me that's totally wrong. I don't know if the teacher just didn't want to bother with sorting this out, or didn't know how, or if she had the same opinion as those people. Who knows!?*

During my interview with Phylicia, we were discussing the use of languages other than English among people in Canadian society. Phylicia stated how it was through her encounter with her non-white teacher that she was able to understand the disassociation between language and residency.

> *PHYLICIA: ...I know a lot of people that speak other languages other than English and French and their Canadian and live in Canada. One of my teachers in Elementary school, actually she was also East Indian, she spoke 8 languages. From knowing her then, that just made me see how just because you speak a different language doesn't mean you're from somewhere else, or from a particular place.*

Sapna explained the difference between having a white teacher and a non-white teacher.

> *SAPNA: The ethnic (non-white) teachers seem a little bit more open. Open towards different viewpoints of other people than most of the white teachers. They're not afraid to leave the textbook and talk about something that deals with this kind of culture that has nothing to do with the curriculum. I don't know, they just seem more open to things which I think is pretty cool if you ask me.*

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND INTERPRETIVE DISCUSSION

Just as the students were aware of the salience of "race" and culture within Canadian society, so too were they aware of the salience of "race" and culture within Canadian schools today both inside and outside of the classroom among students and as well with teachers (see Alladin, 1996; Seifeddine, 1994). Participants indicated that the majority of racism in schools today is covert and/or subtle; joking, however, could potentially be classified as another "type of racism." In James' (1995) study, the practice of joking also surfaced and a non-white student in his shared how joking is perceived by white and non-white individuals.

> …Most of my friends are now white and I love them like brothers. Unfortunately they tend to sometimes make fun of "racial" groups like the Chinese, Indian and Blacks. I am sad when I hear this type of ignorance I bring it up and explain that this type of behaviour is not right but wrong. The response I would get is that "it is only a joke man, take it easy…." I feel that the problems with my friends are ethnocentrism and racism. They see racism as a joke and do it for amusement. Try to see it from a minority's point of view and it is downright stupid (p. 155).

As a result of the ongoing subtle and blatant racism in which white students mark white as the centre reference point for all human comparison (Frankenberg, 1993; Fine, et al, 1997), non-white students internalized their inferiority and marginality, and responded by creating friendships with those peers in similar social positionings. These friendships provided non-white students with pride in their cultural heritage, and a feeling of normalacy. Ponterotto and Pedersen (1993) explain how it is common for individuals

> to prefer their own in group to out groups as it gives one the sense of belonging, identity, pride, and comfort. [Furthermore] prejudice towards one's groups can also serve as a survival mechanism…[as]…groups that

> have been oppressed by the dominant society have had to rely on one another to cope with harsh and oppressive conditions (p. 28).

Furthermore, the students' narratives indicate that Canada's contemporary educational system continues to operate within a predominately Euro-cultural framework despite the "clearly defined objectives in…multicultural education in the school curriculum" (Anchan and Holychuk, 1996, p. 94). The results show that the students of European descent learned about their ethnocultural roots as they learned about the history and contributions of Europeans in the school curriculum, and for some students, through their first hand field trip to Europe (London, Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam). Non-white students on the other hand indicated that they did not learn about their own respective ethnocultural backgrounds histories and contributions both within Canada or globally as did their white peers. Although they did not critically object to being educated within a Eurocentric framework, they did indicate a lack of identification with the core curriculum which in effect internally impacted their identity and self-esteem (Banks, 1992; Dei, 1996). This exclusion and lack of representation of "non-whites" and lack of inclusivity has been documented by many educational scholars such as Apple, Aronowitz, Banks, Crichlow, Dei, Freire, Giroux, McCarthy, and Moodley, in the curriculum. Within a Canadian context, Henry et al (1995) point out

> Racism in the curriculum manifests itself in subjects such as history, literature, social studies, geography, and science. The perspectives of novelists and poets who reflect the history and experiences of non-Western cultures are generally omitted from the Eurocentric curriculum. The history curriculum often exhibits a dominant-culture bias that expresses itself in the way history texts are written. There is an unwillingness to look beyond the study of British, American, or European history, and multicultural history is often considered as separate and distinct from Canadian history (p. 179).

When non-European cultures were mentioned in the classroom lesson, they were either "skimmed over" with no comprehensive discussion, or the 4Ds: dialect, dance, dress, and diet framework was employed; a pedagogy commonly coined with those teachers disengaged with, or inadequately educated in the praxis of multicultural and/or anti-racist education. As (Banks) points out

> ...[S]tudents in white dominant school structures have not benefited from Canada's policy of multiculturalism. Despite this national policy, dominant-group educators continue to embrace an ethnocentric approach to pedagogy within schools. Although the official policy is multiculturalism,...responses show that the dominant teaching paradigm within Canadian classrooms is [still] cultural assimilation. Teachers are socializing racial and ethnic minority children into the dominant, mainstream culture (p. 126).

All of the students were aware that that issues regarding "race" relations were far more complex and rooted than what was taught to them at school. With the exception of a few white students, the remainder of white and non-white students, believed that the area of "race" relations needs to be constructively embedded within the core school curriculum given that "racial" and cultural diversity are a contemporary Canadian reality and that ignorance towards those who are different "no longer prevails." The students themselves referred to history as the central point for learning, discussing, and understanding contemporary "race" relations.

Ideally, "the teacher" was viewed by students to be the instrumental source of knowledge and objectivity in both theory and practice in creating a classroom environment of educating about inter-cultural understanding. However, based on their own first hand experiences with teachers in the education system, all of the non-white students and some of the white students articulated a lack of knowledge and inequippedness of teachers to (objectively) address the surface and deeper issues associated with "racial" and cultural diversity as some teachers were perceived to be racist by some white and non-white students, stereotyping, and possessing low expectations of non-white students on the basis of their "race." Within Edmonton, similar views were echoed in Codjoe's (1997) and Kelly's (1998) study respectively. In Dei's (1996) study students additionally revealed that "the racist behaviour and attitudes of some teachers and school staff was particularly central to their overall perception of the school system" (pp. 46-47) as a whole.

This lack of equippedness on the part of white teachers as identified by the students themselves is due to their social location of privilege which immobilizes them from understanding the non-white experience. "Teachers are human beings who bring their cultural perspectives, values, hopes, dreams,...prejudices, stereotypes, and misconceptions to the classroom (Banks, 1992). In her book, *Making Meaning of Whiteness,* McIntyre (1997) skillfully illustrates through her "white talk" with white teacher-education students what it means to be white and the impact one's white "racial" identity has on one's notion of what it means to be a teacher. Her findings reveal that

> white people (teachers) fear being thought of as racist or as "bad people," yet at the same time usually do not experience the outrage at racism that would move us to act differently. White people have grown up learning racial stereotypes that inform their thinking whether they consciously like it or not, and usually lack an awareness of the institutional racism in which they participate in everyday. While in an abstract sense white people may not like the idea of reproducing white racism, and in a personal sense, do not see themselves as racist, in their talk and actions, they are (Sleeter, 1997; cited in McIntyre, 1997, p. xi).

Translated into the classroom, "teachers' values and perspectives mediate and interact with what they teach and influence the way that messages are communicated and perceived by their students" (Banks, 1992, p. 167). For example

> [a] teacher who believes that Christopher Columbus discovered America, and one who believes that Columbus came to America when it was peopled by groups with rich and diverse cultures will send different messages to their students when the European exploration of America is studied (ibid, p. 167).

In addition to "their inability to see their complicity with the (re)production of knowledge, values, beliefs, and racist myths that have their genesis in a white, Eurocentric, class-based system of privilege and authority" (McIntyre, 1997, p. 125), these student teachers in McIntyre's study also denied the existence of racism in an era marked by Civil Rights movements. Consequently, a number of the participants embraced a doctrine of colour-blindness and believed that by ignoring the "race"/ethnicity of their students, they are being treated equally. However, this approach not only "allows white people to both ignore the benefits of whiteness and dismiss the experiences of people of colour…but understand the relationship between those experiences and the bifurcation of "racial" equity in our schools and in our society (p. 126).

Today as we "progress" in the area of inter-cultural diversity within the field of education, we find the cultural differences model, which is marked by "racial"/physical differences, gaining increasing popularity in education as teachers try to educate in the midst of much diversity. Essentially, teachers are encouraged to become familiar with and inventory various cultural practices among the various respective "racial" groups, so that should they need to intervene, the issue(s) can be explained based on the list of characteristic(s) recorded respective to that culture. For example,

> researchers exploring the schooling issues of Asian children in Canada, the United States and Britain often attribute both their school achievements and failures to Asian cultural values and practices. If Asians do well in school, it is because of their cultural attachment to education; if they do badly, it is because of their failure to 'acculturate' in the 'host' society (Razack, 1998, p. 9).

"This superficial reading of (cultural) differences…makes [historically rooted] power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place" (ibid, p. 9) that originated during imperialism. As Razack (1998) points out

> If white teachers can learn the appropriate cultural rules, we need not hire Black teachers, and we need not address racism. More important, pluralistic model of inclusion assume that we have long ago banished the stereotypes from our heads. These models suggest that with a little practice and the right information, we can all be innocent subjects, standing outside hierarchical social relations, who are not accountable for the past or implicated in the present. It is not our ableism, racism, sexism, or heterosexism that gets in the way of communicating across differences, but *their* disability, *their* culture, *their* biology, or *their* lifestyle. In sum, the cultural differences approach reinforces an important epistemological cornerstone of imperialism: the colonized possess a series of knowable characteristics and can be studied, known, and managed accordingly by the colonizers whose own complicity remains masked (pp. 9-10).

In addition to believing that inequipped teachers are a hindrance in genuinely engaging in ameliorative praxis of "race" relations, students also conveyed that their textbooks lacked depth and knowledge regarding Other non-Western cultures. As Henry et al, (1995) point out

> A comprehensive analysis of school textbooks shows how Eurocentrism and racism operate through curriculum (Klein, 1985). In the curriculum, the history of people of colour begins when whites "discover" them. Human civilization is portrayed as an evolutionary process in which Euro-American culture – the Western legal system, democratic forms of government, and a capitalist economy – is considered the best in the

> world. This perspective is also manifested in the learning resources, which often fail to reflect alternative viewpoints (p. 179).

While the consistent transmission of European knowledge, values, beliefs, ideologies, histories, and contributions via multiple channels serve to empower those of European descent, they simultaneously teach non-white students to devalue the richness and legitimacy of their indigenous cultures respectively given its absence, much like earlier this century. The educational system's pedagogical layout does not provide students with the tools to critically engage in the legitimacy of knowledge (Freire, 1996). As Banks (1992) points out

> Students are usually taught school knowledge as a set of facts and concepts to be memorized and later recalled. They are rarely encouraged to examine the assumptions, values, and the nature of the knowledge they are required to memorize or to examine the ways in which knowledge is constructed. Knowledge in the school curriculum is usually viewed as objective, neutral and immune from critical analysis (p. 154).

A lack of critical thought and the consequent internal penetration of an illegitimate ethnocultural background was exemplified by Rose. A critical discussion of the historical roots of colonialism in Vietnam provided her with a deeper clearer understanding of how and why Vietnam is in the present state it is, as opposed to possessing a superficial negative view of it. Although it was not conscious, the interviews between myself and Mike resulted in him voluntarily looking inwards and critically reflecting on the social environment around him as well as the social and ideological positions he possesses. This exposure and critical thought was a first for Mike.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the contemporary views, opinions, knowledge, and experiences of grade 12 students regarding racial and cultural diversity within Canadian society upon the immediate completion/conclusion of their public schooling. All of the students indicated that school was the primary source that contributed to their present views, perceptions, knowledge, and understanding of "race," culture, and ethnicity. Because it is assumed that the educational system is dynamic and reflective of the times, the underlying purpose of conducting this research was to critically examine, via the students' voices, whether these students, who are the resulting products of Canada's contemporary educational system, are adequately (in both theory and practice) equipped for adult citizenship in multi-racial and multi-cultural Canada.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Canadian History

Students' contemporary views regarding "race," ethnicity, and culture within Canada stemmed primarily from their understanding of Canadian history as it was taught to them in school from an exclusively Eurocentric perspective. This significant finding in which 100% of the students themselves juxtaposed their views and perceptions regarding Canada's present societal context with their understanding of Canadian history must remain a centre theme alongside the many findings within this study. This finding among the students should not be surprising to academics but rather reinforce social scientists' argument that interactions between groups can not be explained as static random moments in time but rather stem from rooted histories that simply can not be transcended or ignored.

All of the students acknowledged Canada's First Nations Peoples as the original inhabitants of Canada but the Europeans were regarded as the "founders" and "establishers" of Canada with extensive rooted histories comparatively. Three of the "white" students' responses centred around the notion of "civilizing" and "developing," echoing the Eurocentric schools of thought regarding "race" and human evolution found during the peak of the colonial era. The histories, experiences, and contributions of Canada's First Nations Peoples prior to 1867 were deemed irrelevant and extraneous to contemporary post-modern "Canada." Some of the students viewed the First Nations Peoples as "globally homeless" whereas others categorized them as "immigrants" to/in Canada. Students were not aware that Canada's "white" population growth and expansionism was not marked until recently in the earlier half of this century.

With regards to "Others" in Canada, students indicated an awareness of the Chinese and Japanese "labourers" in Canada earlier this century but the presence of "Other" noteworthy non-whites and their respective established histories, contributions, and experiences in Canadian history were not mentioned or recognized. Furthermore, in discussing the comparison between the number of white and non-white settlers present in Canada earlier this century, students were not aware that while the Canadian government was championing the immigration of "white" settlers, it was simultaneously and consciously preventing the entry of non-whites into Canada via racist immigration policies except when labour shortages emerged in which case non-whites were imported strictly for manual labour purposes. The compilation of the above knowledge and lack of knowledge provided white students with a sense of belonging in Canada whereas some non-white students internalized feelings of inferiority in relationship to the white majority in Canada.

The Canadian Identity

The totality of historical information (not) conveyed to these students in school regarding Canada's history provided students with the conceptual premise of a richly fixed rooted history of whites in Canada thereby regarding the Canadian identity to be solely synonymous with white. All of the students deemed Canada, and Canadians to be synonymous with "white" and/or were aware of society's perception of Canada and Canadians as white, and that non-whites (for some, this includes Canada's First Nations Peoples) were perceived as immigrants "essentially" with fixed cultural traits irrespective of the number of years in Canada, and/or if they were born and/or raised in Canada solely on the basis of their racial construction. In referring back to Canada's objective earlier this century of creating a "white" Canada, it is fair to articulate that it was successful.

Unlike white students who themselves indicated that they do not have to think about their "ethnoculturality," non-white students reported routine encounters with "Canadian" society in which their (national) identity and origin was/is questioned. This reinforced their sense of positional inferiority and constantly reminded them of society's orientation of who is and who is not deemed a Canadian. Although all of the white students who were composed of an amalgamation of various European ancestries defined themselves solely as 100% Canadian, some of the other white students defined themselves either in reference to their country of origin or as hyphenated Canadians indicating that the construct of white is itself not an essential entity. It was found that non-white individuals and recent white immigrants, who have lived the complexity associated with the formation and social positioning of their own post-modern cultural identities, possessed a conceptual understanding of the existence of multiple identities and were able to translate this understanding on to all others, whereas the Canadian white students did not provide evidence of the ability to apply this ideology as indicated in the interviews.

Perception of Society

Based on the interviews, although all of the students felt that "race" relations have improved to some extent compared to historically, they all also articulated an awareness of unequal treatment between whites and non-whites in Canada specifically as it relates to access of "power" and "privileges." Non-white students indicated internalizing a sense of inferiority from the existence of a pulsating "white norm" within Canada's macroframework; white students echoed the non-white students' perceptions of a norm as they discussed their (white) normative social location within Canadian society comparative to "immigrants" and "Others."

In addition to the above, all of the students stated that racism exists in contemporary Canada and operates at a more covert level as opposed to overt. The literature on "race" relations supports and highlights this dynamic/pattern as well. Based on the individual interviews, it was found that the non-white students experienced racism whereas the white "Canadian" students did not; Peter however, experienced cultural racism twice at school. Instead, some of the latter admitted to exercising it. They stated that it stemmed from the existence of diverse cultures, religions, "races," in (multicultural) Canada. Although the results of the survey questionnaire indicated that 98% students viewed multiculturalism as a positive component in Canadian society; one student (white) felt that it was both positive and negative, the in-depth interviews revealed that multiculturalism and immigrants within Canada were problematic for "Canadian" students as the presence of non-white "Others'" accent, dress, language, religion, culture, and allocation of "special" rights not only tainted the core white Canadian culture but "took away" from Canada's national identity. Because these (white) students believed that Canada has a deep rooted history of whites in Canada, they believe that Canada should remain mono-racial, mono-cultural, and mono-religious to mark Canada's national identity. The increase and increasing existence of racial and cultural diversity in Canada was regarded as a threat to the identification and sustainability of Canada's dominant white culture. Furthermore, there was a genuine internal concern and feeling of dis-ease among these white students that they may no longer be the numerical majority in Canada given the increase of immigrants/non-whites and consequently lose their positions of power, privilege, and what constitutes being the Canadian norm. Non-whites students perceived multiculturalism as a positive component of Canadian society given its homogeneous characteristic while articulating it was problematic for white Canadians.

Curriculum and Cultural Representations

The majority of white students felt that the curriculum and content taught was very supportive of their ethnocultural background as they learned about their European background/roots, history, and contributions both within Canada and during the World Wars. Some students reported being given the first hand opportunity to go to Europe for Social Studies class; no other countries were offered. In contrast, non-white students felt the curriculum was alienating as the content taught did not reflect their ethnocultural backgrounds/roots and histories both within Canada and/nor abroad as it did their white peers' (see Kelly, 1998). When the contributions of individuals from their respective cultural backgrounds were mentioned (briefly) they indicated that they felt "good." None of the white students objected to being educated within an Eurocentric framework as there was an ideological privileging of the West over their own ethnocultural roots, histories, and contributions. All of the non-white students however, were critical as to how and what was taught about other cultures. They all mentioned that when content regarding Other cultures was taught, it was "skimmed over" quickly by teachers. Just as their teachers merely mentioned historical occurrences fragmentedly without detailed comprehensive explanations as to why, so did the textbooks. Students expressed teachers' inability to delve into depth with regards to issues of "race," culture, and ethnicity due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the area themselves which was a hindrance for them in gaining the theoretical and practical knowledge in the area. Some white students reported possessing negative images of other cultures around the globe based on the pedagogy employed in the classroom. Non-white students reported observing some white students' negative perceptions of other cultures based on their "laughing" and negatively overt statements.

"Race" Relations in School

The results of the survey questionnaire, the in-depth interviews, and my direct observations revealed that racial division and disunity among students existed. That is, white students befriended/socialized with other white students and non-white students befriended/socialized with non-white students of various cultural backgrounds within the educational institution. It was explained that the befriending of similar cultural groups in particular was rooted in a shared language and a common set of values and beliefs that were shared and understood among individuals of similar backgrounds rather than interrogated. None of the non-white students reported experiencing overt racism directly in school but were aware of its existence based on their past experiences and present observations. Some students indicated that joking was a type of style employed by individuals as a means to convey his/her racist thoughts. Given the ambiguity surrounding this method, it is ultimately the recipient that assesses whether the joke was meant to be offensive or not. In schools, racism is typically not overtly expressed to the intended individuals nor in the presence of teachers due to the educational consequences that result. A number of non-white students did report that teachers do not handle or address incidences of racism when they occur adequately and/or ignore them. Therefore in cases when racism is overtly exercised in school to the intended individual(s), some students choose to address the incident whereas others will not and dismiss it usually due to fear. Some will not deal with it immediately but will handle the incident out of the school's boundary to prevent jeopardizing his/her education, and reputation among peers and especially teachers. Others on the other hand will not say anything and remain silent.

Teachers

Non-white students indicated that they respected their teachers but felt that the respect was not reciprocated by some of their teachers. They believed they were prejudged and stereotyped as intellectually inferior on the basis of their "race" and were consequently ignored and shunned in the classroom. Furthermore, non-white students indicated some teachers' bias towards their own "Canadian" culture while simultaneously putting down "Other" cultures. One white student, an immigrant from Yugoslavia, reported experiencing cultural racism from a teacher. Lastly, teachers were regarded as being inequipped in the praxis of "racial" and cultural diversity which was an impediment in providing students with a concrete conceptual framework in understanding contemporary "race" and ethnic relations.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings within the context of this study were understood at a deeper and critical level as a result of the conceptual and theoretical insights and issues within the discourse of "race" and ethnic relations that have guided this study. Based on the students' responses from the survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews, it can generally be implied that students, white and non-white, who are publicly educated in Alberta (given that educational systems are provincially governed) are not equipped with an adequate conceptual framework around the areas of "race," culture, and ethnicity nor are they equipped for peaceful participation in a multi-racial and multi-cultural infrastructure.

The following segment contains a summary of the recommendations as provided by the students directly through the survey questionnaire and interviews. Although the majority of white students believed that schools provide an adequate understanding of diversity, some white students and all of the non-white students felt that there was room for improvement. Furthermore, when asked if students would like to learn about other cultures, a significant majority of the students (white and non-white) said *"yes."* In addition to supporting the students' recommendations, I have also included some recommendations for educational policies and practices. The recommendations surfaced from within the students themselves who had questions in the area of contemporary "race" relations and believed that ignoring current social realities will not ameliorate voluntarily, and lastly, that ignorance should no longer prevail particularly within a multi-racial and multi-cultural nation.

1. Because the students themselves juxtaposed history with their present understanding of Canada, revisions to the Alberta Curriculum need to be made in which an inclusive framework of Canada's history and development is taught. This would include:

   - The teaching of Canada's First Nations Peoples' histories, contributions, roots, and cultures pre and post 1867 from a First Nations perspective as opposed to a solely European perspective.

   - The teaching of the various ethnic groups' existence, histories, contributions, and roots in Canada earlier this century from the perspective of the respective ethnocultural group.

   - Providing students with an accurate time line indicating when the majority of European immigration to Canada occurred.

   - The teaching of the racist immigration policies that existed earlier this century to actively prevent the entry of non-whites to Canada.

   - Providing students with a time line of all the historical occurrences of Canada's multi-racial and multi-cultural populations.

2. A comprehensive ongoing teaching of colonialism as outlined in the Alberta curriculum would help students to understand the following:
   - The history of "white" supremacy across the globe.

- The political, social, and economic situations which involuntarily and voluntarily brought immigrants to Canada and other parts of the world, and continue to.
- The existence of post-colonial identities which will facilitate in the deconstruction of essentialist viewpoints.

- Understand the contemporary social, political, and economic realities of countries around the globe in a post/neo-colonial era from neutral lenses as opposed to inferior/superior lenses.

It is expected that the possession of an inclusive historical conceptual framework will provide students with:

- the realization of the longevity and establishment of various multi-racial and multi-cultural groups in Canada and understand that multiculturalism is not a recent phenomenon.

- avoid labeling all non-whites as immigrants, but rather understanding the complexity associated with identities given the existence of non-whites in Canada since the latter part of the nineteenth century.

- A humanitarian understanding as to why Canada's First Nations Peoples and ethnic groups are entitled to certain rights and privileges in Canada

- valuing the struggles immigrants were facing within their own respective country and not deem them as "stupid" for coming to a new country.

- the ability to not prejudge and stereotype/essentialize individuals on the basis of their racial construction within a multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

- prevent deeming Canadians as solely white but rather of all ethnic backgrounds which would further prevent the inferior internalization of Non-whites in Canada; particularly those born and/or raised in Canada.

3. Create a course or a unit which focuses on cultural diversity. This would entail not only learning comprehensively about the belief systems, values, customs, histories, endured hardships, education, home life, traditions, and attitudes of other cultures but would provide students with both the conceptual and practical tools to address, tackle, and engage in issues related to racism and inequity and essentially enhance multicultural education in Canadian schools.

4. The employment of teachers from "Other" backgrounds. As Sapna articulated, there is more of a willingness and/or ability of ethnic teachers to move beyond the boundaries of the textbook and curriculum.

5. Based on my interview with Mike, dialoguing was also an effective tool in creating a step towards peaceful relations.

In March 2002, the United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada) created a resource KIT by youth. The content within the KIT resulted from a national project called the Youth Forums Against Racism in which a series of regional forums were held across Canada. This KIT is a compilation of the recommendations articulated by youth in their active attempt to combat racism. This KIT includes an information section, a tools section which contains interactive workshops and activities, as well as a list of resources. In critically reviewing the KIT, it is a valuable tool created by passionate youth committed to eradicating and combating racism.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

During the interpretive phase of this thesis, I began to reflect on the impact colonialism has had socially, economically, politically, environmentally, culturally, as well as on individual and collective identities globally. Many post-colonial scholars discuss and highlight the complexities associated typically with the colonized subjects. Yet the colonials' identity has equally undergone significant transformation. The construction and simultaneous deconstruction involved with the labeling of Canada's white immigrants as solely Canadians, who are of various European backgrounds, requires further investigation.

Secondly, within the context of this study, it was learned how males deal with racism which is primarily through violence. An inquiry into as to how females deal and cope with racism needs to occur.

Lastly, although my study did not focus on gender and identity per se, the intersections of "race," gender, and culture need to be investigated further for future research implications.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As previously stated in Chapter I, the impetus for this study grew primarily from my personal experiences of growing up as a non-white person in Canada. The process of this thesis was very much a journey and an experiential growth process for me. Having stated the inevitability of bringing my own historical situatedness to this study, reading and understanding Gallagher (1992) was instrumental in understanding the lived realities of "Others." The entire process of engaging with the findings and interpretations face to face stretched my scope of understanding of the lived realities of those with different social locations based on the intersections of their "race," culture, class, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and/or experiences. Therefore, in reference to the initial question I postulated in Chapter I, I think we need to.

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APPENDIX 1

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE ON ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

Thank you for your cooperation in responding to the following questions. Please keep in mind all of your responses will be treated confidentially. Please clearly **PRINT** all your responses.

1) Name________________________________ Age_______ Grade_______

2) Are you temporarily in Canada for study purposes? Yes No

3) Were you born in Canada? If not, please state which country you moved from and when.

____

4) Were your parents born in Canada? If not, please state which country they moved from. Mother: __________________ Father: __________________

5) How do you define your ethnocultural background?

____

6) Which language(s) other than English do you speak?

____

7) Where did you learn the language(s)?

____

8) Are languages other than English spoken at home? Yes No

____

9) Do you feel you are losing or maintaining your ability to speak these languages? Please explain.

____

____

____

____

10) Do you consider your ethnocultural background an important aspect of your life? ______ Very important _____Somewhat important _____ Not important. Please explain.

____

____

____

____

11) How much of an understanding do you feel you have about your ethnocultural roots and history? Please explain. ___ Strong ___ Moderate ___ Not at all

12) Is it important for you to maintain your ethnocultural values? Yes or No Please explain

13) Do you think your educational experience thus far has been supportive of your ethnocultural background? ______Very ______Somewhat _____Not at all Please explain

14) Do you experience culture conflict between your home environment and your school environment. ___Yes ___Sometimes___No Please explain.

15) Are you "comfortable" with your ethnocultural background when you are at school? ___Always ___Sometimes___Never Please explain.

16) In your opinion, do schools provide a positive or negative setting for understanding cultural diversity? ___Positive ___Negative. Please explain.

17) Do you think schools can foster a better understanding of ethnocultural diversity? If so, how? Please explain.

18) Would you like to learn about other cultures? If so, what would you like to learn?

19) In your opinion, do you think it is important for others to maintain their ethnocultural values? ___Very important ___Somewhat important __Not important at all. Please explain.

20) Of what ethnocultural background are your close friends at school from? Please explain.

21) How do you define the concept of "race?"

____

____

22) How do you define the concept of culture?

____

____

____

____

____

23) How do you define the concept of ethnicity?

____

____

____

____

____

24) Are the concepts of race and culture something you think about? If so, how often. ___Always ___Sometimes ___Never Please explain.

____

____

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____

25) How do you define multiculturalism?

____

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____

26) Do you think multiculturalism is positive or negative aspect of Canadian society? Please explain.

____

____

____

____

____

27) Would you be willing to discuss these questions in greater depth in a brief interview? Please circle one: Yes or No

28) Do you have any further comments about race, culture, and your school experience?

APPENDIX 2

STUDENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM

June 11, 1998

Dear Student,

My name is Tejwant Chana, and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. As part of the Master's degree requirements, I am conducting research in the area of culture and am exploring the experiences of students within the education system. I want to learn more about students' sense of identity within culturally diverse school environments.

I would like your permission to include you in my study. In the course of my research, I had administered a questionnaire both with the approval of the school administration and in accordance to the ethical guidelines. The purpose of that questionnaire was to gather preliminary data on students' perception of cultural diversity. Within this questionnaire, I had asked if "you would be willing to discuss these questions in greater depth in an interview?" Your response to the question is yes. I have asked your parents via a consent form, and they have agreed that you can participate in this study if you want.

I would like to interview you at least twice. In the first interview, I will have you elaborate on your responses in the questionnaire. In the second interview, I will address questions pertaining specifically to the results of the first interview, as well to clarify any uncertainties from the first interview. If necessary, I may request you to provide more information in a third interview. All interviews will be audio taped, transcribed, and then shared with you as a check for veracity. Interviews will be conducted during times which are convenient for you and which will not disrupt your normal school schedule.

I will assure confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms and will not identify you, or any individual, or organization, or school by name. Please understand that if you agree to take part in this research and later decide at any particular point of the research that you do not wish to participate, you have the right to say no.

Please indicate on the form below if you are willing to participate in this study or not. I Thank you very much in advance for your kind consideration of this request. If you have further questions about this invitation, please contact me at the number below.

Kind Regards,

Tejwant K. Chana
University of Alberta, Educational Policy Studies
431-0481

I, ____, give/do not give permission
(Student's Name)

to Tejwant Chana, to include me, ________________________________, in the
(Student's Name)
research project outlined above.

____________________	________________	________________
Signature of Student	**Date**	**Phone Number**

APPENDIX 3

PARENT CONSENT FORM TO ALLOW CHILD'S PARTICIPATION

June 11, 1998

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Tejwant Chana, and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. As part of the Master's degree requirements, I am conducting research in the area of culture and am exploring the experiences of students within the education system. I want to learn more about students' sense of identity within culturally diverse school environments.

I would like your permission to include your child in my study. In the course of my research, a questionnaire was administered to students both with the approval of the school administration and in accordance to the ethical guidelines. The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather preliminary data on students' perception of cultural diversity. Within this questionnaire, I had asked "Would you be willing to discuss these questions in greater depth in an interview?" Your child's response to the question is yes.

I would like to interview your child at least twice. In the first interview, I will have your child elaborate on their responses to the questionnaire. The second interview will address questions pertaining specifically to the results of the first interview, as well to clarify any uncertainties from the first interview. If necessary, I may request your child to provide more information in a third interview. All interviews will be audio taped, transcribed, and then shared with your child. Interviews will be conducted during times which are convenient for your child and which will not disrupt their normal school schedules.

I will assure confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms and will not identify your child, or any individual, or organization, or school by name.

Please understand that if you agree to allow your child to take part in this research and later decide at any particular point of the research that you do not wish your child to participate, you have the right to say no.

Please indicate on the form below whether you consent or do not consent to the participation of your child in the study. I Thank you very much in advance for your kind consideration of this request. If you have further questions about this invitation, please contact me at the number below.

Kind Regards,

Tejwant K. Chana
University of Alberta, Educational Policy Studies
431-0481

I, ______________________________, give/do not give permission
(Parent's Name)

to Tejwant Chana, to include my child, ______________________________,
(Student's Name)
in the research project outlined above.

______________________________ ____________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian **Date**

Parent Contact Number: ______________________________